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JESUS AND THE ORAL GOSPEL TRADITION

Edited by
HENRY WANSBROUGH





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Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition

edited by
Henry Wansbrough

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>AcOr</i>	<i>Acta orientalia</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ASNU	Acta seminarii neotestamentici upsaliensis
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BFCT	Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BoJ	Bonner Jahrbücher
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
BZNW	Beihefte zur ZNW
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
ConBNT	Coniectanea biblica, New Testament
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad novum testamentum
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia judaica</i> (1971)
ETR	<i>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FOTL	Forms of Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FzB	Forschung zur Bibel
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>

<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRH</i>	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series</i>
<i>KAV</i>	Keilschrifttexte aus Assur Verschiedenen Inhalts
<i>KEK</i>	Kritische-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
<i>LCL</i>	Loeb Classical Library
<i>LV</i>	<i>Lumière et vie</i>
<i>MBTh</i>	Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie
<i>NA</i>	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
<i>NCB</i>	New Century Bible
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NovTSup</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum, Supplements</i>
<i>NTD</i>	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OBO</i>	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
<i>ParMiss</i>	Parole et mission
<i>PSBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology</i>
<i>PTS</i>	Patristische Texte und Studien
<i>QD</i>	Quaestiones disputatae
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>SBLDS</i>	SBL Dissertation Series
<i>SC</i>	Sources chrétiennes
<i>SNTA</i>	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Auxilia
<i>SNTSMS</i>	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SPB</i>	Studia postbiblica
<i>ST</i>	Studia theologica
<i>SUC</i>	Saggi di umanesimo cristiano
<i>SVigChr</i>	Vigilae christianae
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TD</i>	<i>Theology Digest</i>
<i>ThBeitr</i>	<i>Theologische Beiträge</i>
<i>THKNT</i>	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i>
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplements</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WdF</i>	Wege der Forschung
<i>WMANT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

INTRODUCTION

This series of papers represents a moment in the continuing discussion of Gospel origins. It grew out of the International Symposium on the Interrelations among the Gospels held at Jerusalem in 1984. That Symposium was intended to set against one another the major solutions to the Synoptic problem.

Discussion centred round the two-document theory, the neo-Griesbachian (or two-Gospel) theory, and the multiple-stage hypothesis. The road to the Symposium and the discussions there have been described in *The Interrelations of the Gospels*, edited by David L. Dungan (Leuven: Peeters, 1990).

As the Symposium drew to an end it was becoming clear that progress in discussion of the order of composition of the Synoptic Gospels demanded research into the stage of tradition which preceded the writing down of the Gospels. An emphasis on the importance of the oral tradition, as well as a realization that the written Gospels depend on a period of oral transmission in the Christian communities, has been one of the salient contributions of the twentieth century to the study of the Gospels.

Nor did the importance of the oral transmission of the Jesus-material come to an end with the writing down of the Gospels. It is, of course, in any case clear that the writing down of the Gospels was not the result of one single act of composition; the Gospel did not spring fully-formed from the head of the evangelist. The preface of Luke makes clear that the author knew of a number of written accounts available in the Christian communities, and different scholars have, with more or less verisimilitude, discerned behind our present Gospels a variety of fragmentary written documents, such as the Day at Capernaum, the *Section des pains* or a primitive Passion Narrative. The variations among the Gospels themselves must involve some unwritten traditions of Jesus-material which enabled the evangelists, in whatever order they composed their Gospels, to supplement, fill out

and interpret the written material which they received. The present volume does not intend to be committed to any particular source theory or solution to the Synoptic problem. But, with one or two possible exceptions, whatever theory is proposed, it is accepted that the later evangelists brought to their task insights and possibly material which they had themselves received from oral tradition. So, for instance, on the two-source theory, there is still room for oral tradition in the special Matthaean and special Lukan material. On the neo-Griesbachian hypothesis, Luke and Mark would have used at least some oral tradition. Especially if the multiple-source solution is correct was the oral tradition important. Oral transmission of Jesus-material must, therefore, have continued for some time side by side with written documents of the genre of Gospel.

Furthermore, both textual variations in the manuscript tradition of the Gospels and quotation in the early Church writings of sayings attributed to Jesus but not contained in the Gospels—quite apart from such large collections as the *Gospel of Thomas*, some of which have significant claims to at least partial authenticity—attest that even the final versions of the Gospels did not capture and exhaust the whole of the Jesus-material which was at large in the early Christian communities. It was not mere convention which led the author of John 21 to conclude, 'There was much else that Jesus did; if it were written down in detail, I do not suppose the world itself would hold all the books that would be written' (Jn 21.25; cf. 20.30). Oral tradition, therefore, continued with a life of its own well after the composition of the Gospels. Hence at the end of the Jerusalem Conference the full subject proposed for study was 'Oral tradition before, in and outside the Gospels'.

The first task was to examine oral tradition in general, and oral tradition in the particular world of Gospel origins. This took place in summer 1989 at All Hallows Pastoral Centre in Dublin, under the patronage of the Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland Archbishops of Dublin; the papers that were circulated beforehand and there discussed constitute the first half of this book. Øivind Andersen opened with a wide-ranging paper on the nature and forms of oral tradition and written literature, their similarities and differences and the interplay between them. Since the Gospels grew in a milieu marked by both Jewish and Hellenistic cultures, David Aune first examined the characteristics of oral tradition in the Hellenistic world, especially as

found in the evidence of travel guides, history writing and religious cult-legends. For the specifically Jewish world, evidence for the concept of oral tradition in the later biblical period was presented by Hans-Peter Rüeger, and for Second Temple Judaism (and especially Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls) by Shemaryahu Talmon. Since the publication of Birger Gerhardsson's seminal work *Memory and Manuscript* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961) his ideas, put forward in that and subsequent publications (most fully in *The Gospel Tradition*; Lund: Gleerup, 1986), have formed at least the background to any discussion of the oral tradition in the Gospels; Ben Meyer therefore concluded this first part of the double conference with reflections on the methodological and theological consequences of Gerhardsson's position.

The second part of the conference took place at the Villa Cagnola, Gazzada, at the kind invitation and under the patronage of Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan, in summer 1990. Almost all the speakers had been present at the first part of the conference, and were therefore able to take into account the findings of that meeting. Again, to allow more time for discussion, the papers were circulated beforehand and presented only by way of résumé in the conference room. Philip Alexander first supplemented the background to the oral teaching of Jesus by his paper on orality in Pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism, after which Rainer Riesner stressed the modes of the tradition of Jesus' teaching in the Gospel. The three subsequent papers, respectively by David Aune, Birger Gerhardsson and Earle Ellis, applied the discussion to three different genres of narratives in the Synoptic Gospels: aphoristic meshalim, narrative meshalim and episodal narratives. At a late stage it had transpired that the speaker scheduled to give a paper on the narratives of the Passion was unavailable, and Marion Soards generously agreed to contribute to this volume an essay not delivered at the conference on that important topic, without which the circle would not have been complete.

James Dunn extended the discussion to the Fourth Gospel, with an examination of the implications for the oral tradition of parallels between John and the Synoptics. Implications of the Pauline literature for the oral tradition of the sayings of Jesus, its fluidity and gradual fixation, were suggested by Traugott Holtz. Finally Willy Rordorf explored, with special reference to two recent essays, the relationship between the *Didache* and the Synoptics, and its implications for the oral tradition. The participants were well aware that this last was no

more than a sample probe into the rich field of oral tradition in the second century.

The participants in the Symposium were: at both Dublin and Gazzada, P. Alexander (Manchester), Ø. Andersen (Athens), D. Aune (Chicago), D. Dungan (Knoxville), J. Dunn (Durham), E. Ellis (Fort Worth), W. Farmer (Dallas), B. Gerhardsson (Lund), T. Holtz (Halle), B. Orchard (London), P. Shuler (Abilene), S. Talmon (Jerusalem), H. Wansbrough (Oxford); at Dublin only, P. Borgen (Trondheim), J. Dillon (Dublin), S. Freyne (Dublin), P. Stuhlmacher (Tübingen), H.-P. Rüeger (Tübingen); at Gazzada only, H. Klein (Sibiu), Bishop J. Mejia (Rome), D. Moessner (Basel), D. Peabody (Lincoln, Nebraska), I. Reicke (Basel), R. Riesner (Tübingen), W. Rordorf (Neuchâtel).

At the end of the Symposium it was thought useful to record the following statement.

1. Accepted Findings

The evidence we have been examining attests in itself a concern on the part of the earliest Christians to recall the ministry of Jesus, including not least his words and actions, and to preserve and pass on these traditions. The testimony that traditions were passed to new congregations by the apostolic founder (including use of technical terms for the transmission of tradition) and the importance of a teaching role within the earliest congregations are complementary evidence.

We have been unable to deduce or derive any marks which distinguish clearly between an oral and a written transmission process. Each can show a similar degree of fixity and variability. We can, however, say of the Gospel material that the process of transmission has been marked by a combination of fixity and variability. The degree of fixity and variability differs when we confine comparison to the Synoptic tradition and when we include the Johannine tradition, with later *agrapha* not to be ignored.

It should not easily be assumed that clear distinctions can be drawn between earlier and later stages of transmission in terms of theological characteristics, for example, Christology. Whereas analysis of the Gospel traditions in terms of literary interdependence invites the analogy of a chain of tradition with many intermediate links, the variability, particularly of the oral traditioning process, may mean that only one link need necessarily be postulated between the original

word/act and the present form of the tradition. In this case the spokes of a wheel rather than the links of a chain provide a better analogy.

We cannot make any universal generalization that the Aramaic and/or Hebrew is always earlier and Greek always later, or that oral form always precedes written.

It is important to bear in mind the context of transmission and interpretation. The procedure of the Symposium inevitably ran the risk of fragmentation in the analysis of the evidence. Different forms would of course have been present in all congregations, as part of a whole tradition, and would have been held within the structure of the Gospel—as in our present Gospels.

Convergence is valuable as a criterion of recognizable procedure and content. This enables us to use some rabbinic material in comparison as well as the transmission of the Hebrew Bible and its Greek translation, and other documents of Second Temple Judaism.

2. Pointers to Further Investigation

1. *Terminology.* Is it desirable to have a single overarching category in the analysis of the teaching of Jesus, for example, *meshalim*? This would help avoid fragmentation of the discussion. On the other hand it might simply foster unnecessary debate about terms.

2. *Control.* Was there a recognition from the beginning of need for control of transmission and its variability? Was there a conscious exercise of control, and if so, by whom? Was such control at all uniform and effective among the churches? What criteria were used? When and why was the Jesus tradition put into the form of the written Gospels, and on whose authority?

3. *Clarity of Jesus' Teaching.* Can it be assumed that the sayings of Jesus were always intended to be clear, or were some sayings deliberately enigmatic? Did Jesus ever intend his meaning to remain veiled?

4. *Source-critical Presuppositions.* To what extent does any analysis of transmission and tradition depend on the assumption of a particular source-critical position?

5. *Written and Oral Tradition.* Given that so much of our material reflects substantial literary interdependence, can the presence of only a few fixed points of verbal agreement between some of these traditions count as evidence of oral transmission?

6. *Semitisms.* Is the presence or absence of Semitisms and devices such as *parallelismus membrorum* in two closely related texts evidence of early tradition?

7. *Stylistic Characteristics.* Similarly, is the presence of better/worse Greek, clear-cut/broken forms, more/less detail evidence of early tradition?

8. *The Fourth Gospel.* What are the consequences of the inclusion of the Fourth Gospel within the canon for an understanding of the acceptability of such a degree of variation and interplay of historical and theological factors in the transmission of the Jesus tradition?

9. *Psychology and Sociology of Memorizing.* Could long and uniform texts be memorized as easily as shorter and less structured texts?

10. *Techniques of Transmission in Second Temple Judaism.* Further study is required on the way in which prophetic oracles were handled and re-used, and on the way in which wisdom and apocalyptic traditions developed during this period.

11. *Later Stages of the Process of Transmission.* Further study is also required of the later stages of the process of transmission, for example, the effect of putting the tradition into the form of a written Gospel, the post-Pauline and late first-century and early second-century tradition, and the significance of textual variations in the early manuscript tradition.

12. *Infancy Narratives.* We are aware that our study has not included the infancy narratives.

It is to be hoped that the papers in this volume will provide a stimulus to discussion of some of these outstanding problems.

It remains only to thank our hosts at All Hallows Centre and Villa Cagnola; the unstrained and friendly atmosphere in both places contributed no little to the open and rigorous temper of the discussions. It is a pleasure to thank also the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquity and kind friends Ken Rohan of Rohan Securities, Dublin, and the Earl of Mexborough, all of whose generous financial help made the Symposium and this publication possible. I would like to thank also my confrère Dom Justin Arbery Price of Ampleforth, who added to his normal duties the massive task of preparing copy on computer, ready for publication.

Good Friday 1991

ORAL TRADITION

Øivind Andersen

1. *Scope and Content of this Paper*

In this paper I hope to provide background material and points of reference for a discussion *de traditione evangelica* by the equally legitimate and important procedures of making generalizations and of drawing distinctions. My aim is to point out the essential features of oral tradition and at the same time to alert us to the fact that nothing much can be meaningfully said without specifications. I have chosen to let my contribution to a certain extent serve as an introduction to the current discussion. That is why I shall in particular cite, and often quote, more recent literature. I shall hardly touch upon discussion within biblical studies, which is *not* my field, and try as much as possible to go beyond the discussion in Greek studies, which *is*. By ranging widely in time and space, I hope that my contribution may prove the more useful in its context. It goes without saying that investigation of oral tradition and of orality in the ancient world, that is, in the cultural environment of the New Testament itself, is of prime relevance if one tries to assess the role of oral tradition and orality in the formative stages of the Gospels. But a wider perspective is often fruitful when one wishes to see more clearly what is going on. Contrast no less than analogy helps to fill in and give depth to the picture.

I shall take as my point of departure some reflections on oral communication and especially 'the oral situation'. After basic acquaintance with oral culture we shall move on to discuss the definition, characteristics and varieties of oral tradition. Some questions relating to stability and reliability are treated separately. We then leave the utopian

world of pure orality and turn to the encounter and interplay between oral tradition and writing, before reaching some concluding remarks.

2. Primary Oral Communication

I will here touch upon some aspects of what is called 'primary oral communication', which is the state of affairs most relevant to the study of oral tradition. Obviously the same generalizations do not apply when oral speech is recorded and disseminated through modern media.

Oral Language

It is a commonplace that language in an oral context has only an audio-temporal dimension. The sounds of the spoken language are transitory. Writing, on the other hand, bestows on language a visual-spatial coordinate. Materialized and objectified, the message achieves permanence. It is there to be read, not only to be listened to. The oral communicative register thus may seem to be rather limited in the means which are at its disposal. But in fact it might as well be said that it is the written channel which is limited. Oral communication always necessarily involves more than the purely linguistic element. Just as one may say that writing represents something *extra* in that it provides 'a visual representation of oral linguistic elements' (Goody 1987: 78), so one may say that writing is *only* the visual transcription of oral linguistic elements. There is so much which does not get transcribed. Oral-aural communication is never just that. It is mimetic, gestic and motoric even in everyday communication, thus conveying a message with *more* than words. In festive contexts, on special occasions, words are often embedded in ceremony and ritual, assisted by song and dance, providing a spectacle and a tableau to assist the message. Oral communication therefore commands a wide register of visual-spatial elements as well. It is true enough that the words uttered and the whole situation are soon gone with the wind. But the ephemeral nature of oral communication does not imply that the oral mode is somehow lacking in communicative impact. Quite the contrary, it is rather more of a total experience, involving the person and performance of the speaker, the circumstances in general, the sense of community!

The Oral Situation

We are all familiar with communication models which have the 'sender' at the one end and at the other the 'receiver' of the 'message', which is 'encoded' and transmitted as 'signals' through a 'channel', perhaps subject to 'noise', to be 'decoded' in spite of semantic and other difficulties.¹ The important point in our context is that in oral communication, even if we may chart out graphically all the elements which go into the model, the message has no way to go, so to speak, between sender and receiver. The two are face-to-face and communication takes place then and there. The oral message is always transmitted in a *situation*. This oral situation we may analyse into two constituent aspects. First there is the constellation which is made up by the encounter of the sender and the receiver of the message. Secondly, there is the juncture of time and place, the circumstances in which the encounter takes place. Both aspects are likely to co-determine the message. The sender will adapt his presentation of the message to meet somehow the assumptions and anticipations of the audience and he will to some extent inevitably submit to or exploit the circumstances.

We may try to refine this insight somewhat. The oral situation is structured but open. Different options may be exercised. That the circumstances in which communication takes place condition both the form and the content of communication may be seen as something negative, imposing limits and constraints and exerting pressure upon the speaker. Even such banal factors as lack of time may be relevant here. But it is also possible to view the situation as an enabling factor and as something of which one can take advantage. In oral communication the transmitter may transform the situation. He not only presents words, but is present himself. With a view to the speaker, 'a classical principle' has even been invoked, according to which 'the speaker of words is as important as the message he delivers' (Kelber 1987: 112). In the encounter between speaker and hearer, the former—and I think we have all had this experience, at least as hearers—will put his stamp on the situation. But we should not envisage for the audience only the passive role of receiver. If a speaker does not take the nature of the audience into consideration, he will hardly manage to drive the message home. In many cases, moreover, the hearers may ask questions or even scrutinize the speaker; they

1. A good general introduction to communication theories is Fiske 1982.

ultimately have the option of walking out on him. In an oral culture, where there is no hearer, there can be no message. The implication is that an oral traditional 'text' is always part of a context and so may enter a new stage at any point.

I have elaborated somewhat this point about the oral situation because it seems to me to be focal for the understanding of oral communication generally and for oral tradition specifically. It is in the nature of tradition to be adaptive. It is shaped within a parallelogram of forces, between sender and receiver, between inherited elements and present demands.¹

3. *Oral Culture*

To predicate of a culture that it is oral implies that the oral means of communication are made the defining characteristic of the culture in question. We are used to taking writing as a criterion when we make classifications, historically and typologically. Writing marks the transition between pre-history and *history*, which in this sense begins, for example, for Egypt in the early third millennium BC. Writing also is a characteristic of high culture or *civilization*, societies which have a certain degree of urbanization, social stratification and political organization. In both cases, if for different reasons, writing makes a difference and a positive contribution; until then, writing was *lacking*. Similarly in contemporary Western society, 'illiterates' and 'analphabets' are defined negatively, by what they do not possess—and they

1. Without pursuing the matter at greater length at this point, I would like to point out that adaptation is not confined to oral contexts. Goody (1987: 87-88) rightly points out how oral singers are pushed towards variation, 'by their own ingenuity, by their particular audiences or by the wider social situation'. So we are told there are interesting differences in accounts of the Silamaka wars from the neighbouring Bambara and Fulani peoples of West Africa, where 'wandering minstrels or *griots*, belonging to the same patronymic group, had to "change their tune" as they moved from camp to camp; in the same way a Trojan version of the *Iliad* would be a very different one from the Greek'. Yes, indeed, but so are—or were—written accounts of World War I different in France and in Germany; and the same publisher will cater to different tastes with different national newspapers. The important difference lies in the fact that in a literate culture, people may buy several newspapers and compare different versions of the same story, or this year's version with last year's. That is not the case in an oral culture.

are indeed at a disadvantage. 'Savages' and 'primitive peoples', on the other hand, however remote from us in time or space, should not be considered lacking in that sense. Their culture is altogether different and complete in its own terms; it is *oral*. It should be interpreted in terms of what it has, that is, orality, and not in terms of what others have, that is, literacy. It may be useful here to map out some of the implications of orality for the social fabric and the mental make-up of such a culture. If my generalizations seem massive, they nevertheless could help us see things in the right perspective. Even though the culture in which we are primarily interested is anything but fully and purely oral, the salient features of orality will still provide us with an essential backdrop.¹

Characteristics of an Oral Culture

1. In an oral culture words take on meanings in specific contexts. There is no accumulated word-history and there are no codified definitions to abide by. You cannot go beyond the use of a word to its 'lexical meaning'. Language is not abstracted so that words can serve as the foundation for a conceptual matrix. One speaks about 'direct semantic ratification'. While this process is in one sense particularizing it also operates cumulatively, 'and as a result the totality of symbol-referent relationships is more immediately experienced by the individual in an exclusively oral culture, and is thus more deeply socialized' (Goody and Watt 1968: 29). To say that the members of an oral culture have only so much 'world-through-language' as they need to have may be an oversimplification, but one which will point us in the right direction.

2. In an oral culture thinking tends to be situational rather than categorical; concrete rather than abstract. For instance, it is 'little concerned with preserving knowledge of skills as an abstract, self-subsistent corpus' (Ong 1982: 43). Insight into how things are, or instruction in how things are to be done, is conveyed through tales of how things *became* or how others did things, that is, by narrative of action and example, not by analysis. In early Greece, the concept of justice evolved only slowly; δίκη long referred to the *operation* of justice (Havelock 1978). Members of an oral culture tend to shun

1. In the presentation which follows, the points made in section 2 above should also be kept in mind.

classification or characterization on an abstract principle; asked to define what a tree is, they will come up with names of trees (pine, olive, etc.); asked to identify geometric figures, they assign them the names of objects, so that, for example, a 'circle' will be called a plate, a bucket, a moon; asked to group together things that naturally belong together, they will organize objects, for example, according to their use in some sort of labour, and not, say, according to material or other properties (see Ong 1982: 49-57, drawing on Luria 1976).

3. The collective memory or common consciousness in an oral culture is conditioned by the fact that it is wholly dependent upon the memory of the members of the culture, with no inscriptions or written laws to assist it, no documents or archives, let alone annals or historical literature. Oral culture has been characterized as 'homeostatic' (see Goody and Watt 1968: 30-31) and may be said to be subject to 'structural amnesia'. That which is no longer useful and has become irrelevant to the underpinning of cultural identity quickly and quietly passes out of sight, while new elements are accommodated and new versions developed to assist the needs and aspirations of the culture. An example is the on-going adaptations of genealogies to suit prevailing political conditions. Tradition serves the present and is modified accordingly. There are degrees, of course. Vansina (1985: 100) states that 'every traditional message has a particular purpose and fulfills a particular function, otherwise it would not survive'; yet the same author observes, reasonably enough, that continuous selection of intentionally historical accounts does not operate perfectly: 'The presence of archaisms in various traditions gives homeostasis the lie' (1985: 121). One should not define 'purpose' and 'function' too narrowly. Anachronisms also have their charm. And should we expect more consistency in tradition than in life?

4. While oral cultures constantly adjust tradition and so adapt themselves to new circumstances, they may also be said to be fundamentally conservative, or rather traditionalist. Truth and guidance are found first and foremost in tradition. Even as it changes, it is hailed as tradition. Tradition is 'by definition' old.

5. Tradition in an oral culture is not 'deep' since it is present only in the mind of the living members of that culture. It may of course tell of things which are placed in the remotest past, and such tales and many individual elements in tradition may indeed—though exposed to changes—have been with the people for generations. But in the

absence of written records what we may call 'the historical dimension' has no autonomous medium. So there can be no real sense of history. In fact, 'sometimes, especially in genealogies, the recent past and origins are run together as a succession of a single generation', says Vansina (1985: 23), who also comments upon the tendency towards simplification 'by fusing analogous personalities or situations into one' (1985: 21).¹ 'Telescoping' has become the term for that kind of fusing and foreshortening. For some, the world has always been the way it is now, or it was established at some indeterminate point before 'us', complete with all the elements that make up 'our' world.

6. As there are no testimonies which are independent of the oral tradition and by which tradition may be checked, so there can be no recourse to an indisputable, immutable source for 'how it really was' and—more importantly—no need is felt for a definitive version of the past because no use can be made of it. Therefore, there cannot really be exploration nor even exposition of the past in an oral culture, only exploitation. 'All messages have some intent which has to do with the present, otherwise they would not be told in the present and the tradition die out' (Vansina 1985: 92). The past is embedded in the present; it may be stated as an 'oral law' that the present takes precedence over the past. In the case of Homer, this may lead to instances of what I have elsewhere termed 'instant past' surfacing at certain points in the epics and being accepted as valid versions of what has happened before (Andersen 1990).

7. Oral cultures have a high degree of unity. Positively, they may be said to cope relatively easily with contradictions, which may simply be swallowed up through adaptation or levelled out in the elasticity of the give-and-take between members of the culture. After all, nobody has tied his word to a written text. Even today, certain religious groups prefer to have no written creed and constitution, which relieves them of certain problems of dogmatic consistency. Minority points of view tend to get lost in an oral culture. There is no way scepticism can be recorded and so accumulated. Negatively, oral tradition thus may be said to engulf the members of the culture completely, to swallow them up so that they are in a 'closed predicament' and become prisoners of

1. Thomas's (1989: 95-195) study of Greek family traditions and genealogies is very illuminating in this respect, as are some of the contributions in von Ungern-Sternberg and Reinau 1988.

the present, with no sense of alternatives to live by or to invoke. An oral culture is inclusive, is conformist and, seen from the vantage point of a pluralist, literate society, even seems oppressive.

Tradition Sustaining an Oral Culture

An oral culture, to be one culture, nourishes itself by beliefs which need exposition, lives by values that need illustration and sustains itself by institutions which are in need of legitimation. That is what the myths of a culture are for, stories of origins, of gods and of heroes. Oral cultures always have enclaves of myth. To take the case of Homer, Havelock in a seminal book (1963) termed the epic the 'tribal encyclopaedia' of the Greeks. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were true works of reference. They were paradigmatic, not in the sense that they told only about actions to be imitated, but by alerting the Greeks to the overall code of behaviour and scale of values.

To be able to make its impact and fulfil its function as the formative ideological force of an oral culture, the tribal encyclopaedia, according to Havelock, has to possess two characteristics which are indeed prominent in Homer. First, it has to be organized as narrative, centred on human action. That is the only way the 'encyclopaedia' can have an impact and be internalized. In Havelock's perspective narrative is secondary to norm and really only a vehicle to get the values across. Secondly, to be really effectively preserved and communicated, the tradition needs to be in poetic form. That is why the epic oral tradition is in 'contrived speech', what others prefer to call 'standardized oral form' (Goody 1987: 293). It is 'a kind of metrical textbook' where the material is preserved through 'the rhythmic word organised cunningly in verbal and metrical patterns which were unique enough to retain their shape'. 'The memoranda of a culture of wholly oral communication are inscribed in the rhythms and formulas imprinted on the living memory' (Havelock 1963: 87, 43-44, 107). Thus an enclave of poetry comes into being. And 'poetry was not "literature" but a political and social necessity' (Havelock 1963: 125).

These are valid points to make, certainly for Greece.¹ They show

1. It is easy today to criticize Havelock for overstating his case. Particularly the idea that the epic formulaic technique came into existence as a device of memorization and of record while 'the element of improvisation is wholly secondary' (1963: 93) strikes a Homerist as rather far off the mark. But that narrative and poetic form have

how oral culture is sustained by tradition. Still this is not the whole picture of an oral culture. In the case of Greece there is every reason to point also to the contribution of other and opposite, but equally characteristic and formative, features of orality. Early Greek philosophy and science were nourished by discussion and debate. Greek politics and society in general were informed by fierce competition and the need to render account (λόγον διδόναι) and to rally support by means of competitive rhetoric.¹ Of Brahman culture similarly we hear that it is 'very much a culture of the spoken word, and a desire to dominate verbally; to render others speechless by the force of one's own speech and erudition, is a striking aspect of the ethos of the Benarasi Brahman', admittedly in a cultural tradition which is based on texts (Parry 1989: 49). For the Limba of Sierra Leone, a case has been made for their having great awareness of the subtleties and depths of linguistic expression and great capacity for abstract thought, being able to distance themselves from the immediate context of both life and language (see Finnegan 1988: 45-58). Such examples should render our picture of an oral culture somewhat more dynamic and less monolithic. Even when there is a dominant, 'great' tradition, there will be lesser traditions, local and family traditions, influences from outside, conflicting traditions. 'Even in non-literate societies there is no evidence that individuals were prisoners of preordained schemes, of primitive classifications, of the structures of myth. Constrained, yes; imprisoned, no' (Goody 1977: 33).

4. *Oral Tradition*

Terminology and Definitions

Concepts such as *oral situation* and *oral culture* represent 'pure' forms of orality. Such concepts are useful in that they provide us with a model and a measure for phenomena in the rather more contaminated world of experience. We now proceed to *oral tradition* itself, which is manifold and which manifests itself in many different types of forms, and which operates in literate no less than in oral cultures.

Oral tradition comes under the heading of *oral transmission* and of

a cultural function, Havelock showed beyond doubt.

1. This is the prevailing perspective in an important book by Lloyd 1979. See also Andersen 1987.

course the even more general heading of *oral communication*. To distinguish between the latter two concepts, one may say that oral transmission is oral communication of something—a ‘text’ in the widest sense of the word—which is there already before the situation arises. The speaker has something to say which he brings with him. Oral transmission may be of *any* product. It may be of a product of one’s own mind (as when one learns a harangue by heart before delivering it), or of words learnt from the mouth of others (as with gossip); it may be of a text which exists in writing but which is delivered orally; it may be of something rather recent, or of age-old material. The criterion is oral delivery, or rather aural receipt.¹ Oral transmission does not by itself imply any temporal dimension. So just as one often has oral communication without oral transmission, one may have oral transmission without oral tradition. *Oral tradition*, on the other hand, implies that the message somehow comes from the past. Tradition has a *temporal* aspect. That means also that normally a *succession* of transmissions is involved. Consequently tradition, even if it may be individual, is not personal but *transpersonal*. Tradition stems from others, and if the message has weight, it is not by virtue of the transmitter, but by coming from somewhere else. Finally, oral tradition is exactly that, *oral*. It does not make sense to speak about the oral tradition of a written text even if you may have oral transmission of it. But of course there may be oral traditions about things—events and actions alike—about which written source-material also exists.

According to Vansina (1985: 27) oral traditions are ‘verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation’. Henige, in a recent discussion (1988: 232), comes back to his claim that materials, ‘regardless of their historicity’, to qualify for the sobriquet oral tradition(s), ‘should have been transmitted over several generations and to some extent be the common property of a group of people’.² The criterion is that the statement is *from* the past not *about* the past. Thus oral tradition comprises, for example, fairy tales and proverbs. But past material inevitably also is remains and

1. Thus, with a view to the receiver, I would classify the reading aloud of a text as oral transmission, though admittedly of a less ‘pure’ nature than if the text in question had been learnt by heart or if no writing was involved at all. See further section 6 below.

2. See also Henige 1982: 2-3.

relics from the past and so sources for the past conveying messages from, if not directly about, the past. In fact historically relevant material and traditions *about* the past seem to take pride of place in most discussions of oral tradition. (It is thus ironic that the term *oral history* has acquired the rather technical sense of eliciting life stories or reminiscences through interviews so that the practitioners of this branch of historical research limit themselves to contemporary history from the individual's point of view.) Henige's definition of oral tradition serves to delimit it from his concept of oral testimony, 'which, by virtue of being the property of only a few individuals... lack[s] the cachet (if sometimes dubious) that widespread belief and common acceptance grant to "oral tradition"'. Our concept of oral tradition should perhaps be less restricted. One can always disagree about what constitutes 'several generations' and 'a group of people' and discuss when a testimony is widely and commonly enough accepted to deserve the name of tradition. Justification may certainly be found for granting a special status to the kind of oral tradition which is collective and mytho-historical and makes up the 'great', sustaining tradition of a culture. Studies of the Jesus tradition within the New Testament, which spans decades only and not generations and which is the cherished property of only a minority (though no doubt 'a group of people'), would thus fall within the realm of *oral testimony* and not of *oral tradition*. But a change of label would hardly mean much when it comes to assessing the impact of orality.

Two Essential Features of Oral Tradition

There can be no oral tradition (or testimony, if the distinction is to be upheld) without transmission. This is true not only in the banal sense that tradition will die out if there is no one there to carry it on. Rather, oral tradition (or testimony) is alive only as far as it is transmitted. Tradition is nothing if not communicated, or rather, it is a potential which becomes actual through performance. Tradition is what you get here and now.¹ And that is, generally speaking, both something old and something new. The dialectics of what was there already and what is there through the performance have been well put by Vansina (1985: 35):

1. My way of stressing the 'actuality' of tradition is to say that the message transmitted does not *re-present* tradition but it *represents* it (Andersen 1990).

Of course, the same tale handled by quite different talents and for different audiences becomes something quite different, even if the plot, settings, personalities, and the sequence of episodes remains the same. The tale must be well known to the public if the performance is to be a success for the audience must not be overly preoccupied with the task of trying to follow painstakingly what is being told in order to enjoy the tale. They must already know the tale so that they can enjoy the rendering of various episodes, appreciate the innovations, and anticipate the thrills still to come. So every performance is new, but every performance presupposes something old, the tale itself.

If this seems to put the emphasis on tradition as that which is there already, others would stress the primacy of the present, as does Luomala on the Maui-stories of the Pacific (quoted by Finnegan 1985: 130-31). The author-raconteur or storyteller is

the individual who is both the creative agent and the perpetuator of the oral literature. An author-raconteur's creative reinterpretation and synthesis of the mythological stock-in-trade peculiar to a certain island at a particular time achieves the 'uniqueness of the real', to use Hegel's phrase to describe the rich individuality which distinguishes each variant of a myth or a cycle from another even though from the same island. . . Each biographer interprets Maui in the light of the culture not only of his era and island, but of his particular social and intellectual set.

For that master of tradition, the epic singer, A.G. Lord has stressed that he 'is not a mere carrier of tradition but a creative artist making the tradition' (1960: 13). A paragraph from a recent article of his deserves to be quoted in full:

Moreover, tradition is not a thing of the past but a living and dynamic process which began in the past, flourishes in the present, and looks forward into the future as well. While it does not seek novelty for its own sake, it does not avoid the new in the life around it. In the *Odyssey* Phemius sang the newest songs for the suitors in Ithaka. Oral traditional literature tends to make the songs and stories from the past serve the goals of the present for the sake of the future. It is only when a tradition is dying that it begins to lose contact with the present and becomes a preserver of its own past rather than a continuator. (A.B. Lord 1987: 63)

We have admittedly tilted somewhat towards *oral poetry* here, where innovation may be at a premium and creativity more in demand than with certain other genres; for example, proverbs, religious formulas and legal provisions will probably be slower to change even in an oral context. But the case of oral poetry helps us to focus on two

essential features of oral tradition. The first is what might be called the *momentary* nature of the tradition. For Homer or 'the singer of tales' it holds true that 'every performance is a separate song' (A.G. Lord 1960: 4-5) and the same must have been the case with Mrs Brown, who carried in her memory 'not a *text* but a *ballad*, a fluid entity soluble in the mind, to be concretely realised at will in words and music' (see Buchan 1977: 59). Tradition becomes alive and acquires shape in the situation in which it is transmitted. It is important to note that this is true also for the receiver. Tradition is that which is transmitted. The second feature is really a corollary of the first: there is no one 'text', no word-for-word reproduction. Oral tradition consists of varieties. One should not say 'variations', because that entails the idea of an 'original' which the transmitters or performers are playing with and on. There is an outline, a basic story, some indispensable elements, something that all versions will have in common. But tradition as such is inevitably multiform, because it is occasional, not to say individual in its manifestations.

Oral Format

Oral tradition is moulded by *oral technique* and *oral conventions*, which are themselves traditional. Take, for example, the case of congratulatory poems to kings, whether in Norse culture or in some Pacific island culture. They may celebrate recent events, but they will employ conventional techniques and follow inherited patterns and thereby convey tradition. Correspondingly, even though, for example, certain heroic songs which have been recorded in Yugoslavia during this century and which celebrate recent events do not transmit messages from generations back, such specimens may still teach us a great deal about how tradition works in selecting and shaping material. By studying how the present is moulded in traditional terms, we obtain a model for decoding older oral 'texts' and reconstructing the past which lies hidden behind them. The oral formatting and processing must be studied separately for each genre and within each culture.¹ But we may also look for universal tendencies of form and

1. Finnegan in her major works (1970, 1977, 1988) has contributed greatly to illustrating the many varieties of oral composition and performance. While she (e.g. 1988: 59-85) has done much to make us more appreciative of the artistry of oral literature or 'verbal art' in largely non-literate cultures, she has stressed not only what is

format in what is called *oral literature*, that is, those verbal products of a culture which have pretensions beyond everyday speech. The term 'oral literature' has been much discussed and disputed. For if the 'texts' are oral, then there is no 'literature' in the strict sense of the word. Thus attempts have been made, unsuccessfully, to introduce the neologism 'oralature' (see Rosenberg 1987: 75) to stress that we are dealing not with 'literature' in an oral form, but with verbal art before the concept of literature. However, while heeding the warning that 'this strictly preposterous term' (i.e. oral literature) embarrassingly 'reveals our inability to represent to our own minds a heritage of verbally organized materials except as some variant of writing' (Ong 1982: 11), we do not here have much more than a quibble over words. The real difficulty lies at the other end, when what we have to deal with are 'texts' which have been committed to writing. For then they are not *oral* any more. This constitutes a major methodological problem in the study of the oral traditions of the past. To take Homer as an example, he is virtually our only source for the oral traditional poetry of ancient Greece, but we can study his poetry and that poetry only through a petrified product—the transmitted epic text—which in its final and transmitted form perhaps could not have been created without the help of writing. We can study oral traditions in ancient Greece or, say, in the biblical world, only by assuming that the texts are somehow transparent so that we—in spite of everything—can glimpse, if not grasp, oral tradition through them.¹

Jousse in his classic work (1925), based mainly on biblical texts, went rather far in establishing formal laws which would clearly distinguish oral literature from written; and the study of folk narrative and traditional tales, for example, has provided us with quite an inventory of oral features or epic 'laws', for instance, the preference of the number three or of the single scene with only two actors. Still, some would rather see the defining formal characteristic solely in the fact that oral literature is more repetitive: 'It turns out that the only marked difference between oral and written utterances is that repetition occurs more frequently in oral communication'

characteristic for oral literature but above all what is common to oral and literate literature.

1. Foley 1986 contains a number of interpretations of literary works in the oral tradition. Other useful titles by the same author and editor include Foley 1981 and 1985.

(Vansina 1985: 69). For Homer it has been established as an 'oral law' that 'the general takes precedence over the particular' (Combellack 1965: 49). The most obvious general characteristic of oral literature is, I think, the standardization and conventionality which imposes itself upon the material. For a strong statement to this effect we may refer to Ong (1982: 35-36):¹

In an oral culture, to think through something in non-formulaic, non-patterned, non-mnemonic terms, even if it were possible, would be a waste of time, for such thought, once worked through, could never be recovered with any effectiveness, as it could be with the aid of writing. It would not be abiding knowledge but simply a passing thought, however complex. Heavy patterning and communal fixed formulas in oral cultures serve some of the purposes of writing in chirographic cultures, but in doing so they of course determine the kind of thinking that can be done, the way experience is intellectually organized.

Ong (1982: 36ff.) gives a useful list of characteristics of orally based thought and expression; the following items have a particular bearing on form and format:

1. Oral literature is additive rather than subordinate. Ong's example is the creation narrative in Gen. 1.1-5, both in 'the additive Hebrew original' and in the English Douay version from the year 1610, produced in a culture with a still massive oral residue. It is easy to think of examples of this feature in Norse saga literature or in balladry. I would add here, though, that oral literature also employs a number of structural devices which counteract the impression of linearity and presumably make both construction and comprehension easier; for example, the so-called 'ring composition' or symmetrical schemes generally, whether by parallel or by contrast.

2. Oral literature is aggregative rather than analytic. Things come in clusters. Oral expression carries a load of epithets and other formulaic baggage which may seem tiresomely superfluous to literates. Not all of it is meaningful in every context or meaningful any more, even if it traditionally 'belongs'. But 'traditional expressions in oral cultures must not be dismantled, it has been hard work getting them together over the generations, and there is nowhere outside the mind

1. See also section 3 above, where, following Havelock (1963), I had something to say on why the 'great' tradition of an oral culture had to depend upon rhythm and formula.

to store them' (Ong 1982: 39). Such aggregates may also fulfil the important function of embellishment and at the same time give the performer time to move ahead. We may ascribe both functions to the Homeric formulas and to the so-called typical scenes which unfold at any juncture. There are certain ways of saying things which do not allow things to stand out purely and individually.

3. Oral literature is characterized by redundancy and copiousness. To a certain extent this can be explained in terms of the performer—the storyteller, the singer, the preacher—gaining time for himself while repeating phrases which do not cost any concentration, that is, as a means of composition. But we should also view it as a strategy for communication, for redundancy is an effective way of involving the audience and driving the message home. In the absence of writing, which makes it possible literally to keep an eye on things and to scan the text for specific points, it is a great help if the speaker regularly comes back to the same point and with the same phrases.¹

Additive, aggregative, abundant—these may be fair descriptions of 'texts' in the oral format, along with formulaic expressions, typical scenes and standardization generally. We need perhaps to remind ourselves that conventions in oral literature as in any other field are not to be seen solely as constraining but also as enabling factors. The traditional idiom to a certain extent determines how things can be said, and at the same time it makes it possible to say those things (which are what people want to say and to hear). Also it may be said that the peculiar formularity and often high degree of structuredness in oral literature, in short its *formal nature*, contributes less to its 'fixity' than to its 'fluidity', because formal conventions make it easy to handle any matter and may be applied to any material.

The Parameters of Oral Tradition

Many factors must be taken into consideration when one discusses and compares oral traditions. Only when we have subjected 'our' oral tradition to such specification do we know what we are dealing with.

1. I mention here also A.B. Lord's insistence (1987: 57-58 and 1985: 41ff.) that repetitiveness in oral literature may be seen as a ritual element. What we have, especially with repetitions which are not formulas, is 'ritual elaboration'. Only those elements are described fully which are of significance. Repetitions not only redouble, they enhance as well.

There can be no question here of an exhaustive list or of clear-cut categories and neat dichotomies by which we would be able to assign a specific oral tradition to some definitive spot in a matrix. We only try, in a practical way, to bring out the many aspects of oral tradition.

1. *Shape*. A basic distinction is that between those traditions or messages from the past which are embodied in a definite shape and invested with a clear structure and those which simply are 'what is told' and 'what everybody knows'. The latter traditions would fall outside the realm of oral literature. It is a fact that most material from the past is simply handed on in an unstructured manner; it does not take on any specific form. Knowledge, for example, of forefathers and family background does not reside only or even mainly in genealogies that are known as such, but still it is there somehow. For most of us, historical knowledge is piecemeal. It may be collected and activated by what we hear; the observation of Rosenberg (1987: 86) is relevant here: 'in oral traditions brief statements are often evocative of a substantial recall. Narratives that allow the audience a maximum of imaginative creativity are the most successful.' Study of oral traditions, if they are to be kept separate from (psychological) studies of the processes of human memory and (socio-psychological) studies of the phenomenon of collective memory, must concentrate on the study of how a *body* of traditional material is transmitted. The question of *length* is also of great relevance here.

2. *Form*. A distinction should be upheld between traditions in a poetic form and those which are transmitted in prose. As far as stability is concerned, it is assumed that the employment of rigid metrical patterns and elaborate formal structure protect against change and may give us a standard by which we may judge other types of text (see Hofmann 1977: 17). This would apply at least in cases where the idea of tradition is to transmit a 'text' word for word. However, metrical patterns and formal structures do not primarily serve mnemonic purposes, but are aids to composition. They help to create before they help to preserve. Formal intricacies have to be handled by someone or rather by a succession of individuals who master the idiom and who consequently will also be perfectly able to modify and expand the message. As far as memorizing is concerned, it is said to be a general finding that 'passages are relatively easy to memorize if they are

meaningful, and in the listener's native language. Grammaticality is also important, as is brevity; rhyme is an aid to memorization, as is metricality' (Rosenberg 1987: 83). On the other hand 'controlled experiments have demonstrated the ability of longterm memory to store verbatim forms alone... [an example being] those Hausa-speaking Nigerians who have memorized the Koran and who do not know any classical Arabic' (Rosenberg 1987: 81).¹

3. *Genre*. I use the word genre not in any strict sense, but as a pointer to the many kinds of oral tradition which we need to distinguish, for example, heroic narrative, genealogy, fairy tale, anecdote, proverb, statement, etc. The particular tradition with which we deal should always be placed within a system of genres, that is, within a framework which takes account of all the different oral traditions of a culture. To speak about the part one needs to know the whole. This is a basic point; if it does not quite go without saying, I can at least be brief.

4. *Mode*. This refers to aspects of presentation. Some modes of transmission and ways of presenting the material involve the audience more than others. Sometimes the contribution of the audience may give to the presentation an element of dialogue. Poetic 'texts' are sometimes sung, which may be a factor when it comes to preservation. 'The fact messages are sung helps faithful transmissions because the melody acts as a mnemonic device' (Vansina 1985: 16). In some cases two persons, or a whole group of people, deliver the message, perhaps by alternating in performance, repeating each other or carrying the message on, verse for verse or section for section; or the words of a performer may be reiterated by his audience (see Finnegan 1985: 141; Goody 1987: 170). This kind of involvement or co-operation goes beyond any 'audience control' in the usual sense.

5. *Content*. Content often goes with the genre, but may be separated for analytical purposes. I have in mind such categories as theogonic material, religious 'texts', heroic exploits, local legends, praise poetry, love songs, etc. It is a reasonable assumption that different kinds of material are not being transmitted in the same spirit and guarded in

1. Rosenberg refers to Clark and Clark 1971.

the same manner. People do not have the same attitude towards, for example, jokes and sacred stories. Would perhaps the *ipsissima verba* of a religious leader be especially cared for? It seems that a religious text will most often be carefully transmitted (Kiparsky 1976). We may be surprised, however, at the observation that there is no authoritative or doctrinal form of the very important aboriginal Australian Kunmanggur myth, while 'with short and evidently unimportant myths, a high consistency between versions could be maintained' (Goody 1987: 297).¹ Nothing can be taken for granted when it comes to how tradition treats different kinds of material.

6. *Status*. Status refers to the position which a tradition occupies within the culture. It often goes with content. Traditions which constitute the official myths of the culture, or which purport to transmit the words of a founding father or a religious leader, or to divulge the law, all have a status different from traditional material with no such pretensions, such as anecdotes and proverbs. Presumably the former traditions are under stricter control of some sort, and therefore better preserved; on the other hand, it is more important to manipulate such traditions and to reconcile them with present trends and pressing needs. In literate culture some regimes falsify photographs and change encyclopaedias by the very unsophisticated use of scissors; in oral cultures 'truth' and the testimonies of truth may be changed much more easily by those in control.

7. *Participation*. Under this heading comes the question whether a particular tradition is for everyone within the culture or whether it is the property of some special group. I am thinking first and foremost of men's traditions versus women's traditions; but also other distinctions (slave/free, child/adult) must be taken into consideration. Women's traditions will often have been lost in the course of history, or they may be recovered only with difficulty, and it is important to keep them in mind when trying to reconstruct the totality of oral traditions within a culture. The role of mothers, and especially of grandmothers, in the transmission of traditions is another topic which could be mentioned here.

1. Goody is reporting from Stanner 1966.

8. *Context.* Context is closely linked to status and participation. I think mainly of the nature of the occasions on which traditions are transmitted. A distinction should be made between traditions which are transmitted on specific occasions and those which are not; a further distinction could usefully be maintained between secular and religious contexts. Generally, we have on the one hand the ritual, ceremonial or festive occasions and on the other informal situations where things are told at ease and convenience. In the first case the meaning of the message will be co-determined by the occasion (and vice versa). It is a fair assumption that ritualized context works in favour of greater fixity of the message. In the second case the floor belongs more to the individual performer, while at the same time such occasions give the audience a much stronger position. New contexts may change tradition. 'The assumption that public display of authentic folk tradition fosters its maintenance and preservation is ideologically appealing, but dangerously simplistic' (Baumann 1986: 106); stories tend to get longer and more elaborate when the storytellers find themselves in the limelight.

9. *Frequency.* The frequency of transmission is another factor to take into account when assessing an oral tradition. It may be circulating continuously or it may be brought to life on special occasions, either regularly—for example, yearly with the changing seasons—or more rarely, as when a group of young people are initiated, or rather irregularly, when there is a special need for recourse to tradition, for example, in court proceedings, or when people simply feel like hearing it—and so forth. Frequency of transmission seems to bolster faithfulness of reproduction; or at least 'frequency of repetition helps to combat forgetfulness. But frequent repetition does not itself guarantee fidelity of reproduction. Tales told many nights in the month may in fact change faster than tales which are told more infrequently' (Vansina 1985: 40-41). At least as far as epic song is concerned, 'in very general terms a *story* may be reasonably stable in the telling of a single singer' (A.B. Lord 1985: 55); the critical juncture is when it passes from one singer to another. In this connection it is relevant to ask whether the link is between people of immediately succeeding generations, or, as is sometimes the case, whether the transmission tends to bypass one generation and go from grandparent to grandchild.

10. *Rank*. The kind of occasion and frequency of transmission naturally have implications for the status of the transmitter. Many families and communities even in modern societies have their favourite storyteller who will keep alive the memory of what happened at that particular wedding or on that year's fishing trip. In a small community traditions may more or less officially be administered by a few individuals; in some cultures the priest is the key person, in others the singer of tales. One result of Vansina's studies is the generalization, 'The higher the rank of the speaker the truer what he says, even if he speaks about the past' (1985: 130).

11. *Competence*. The foregoing leads us directly to the wider question of within whose competence and in whose possession tradition is. Tradition may be elitist in the sense that it is embodied in specialized language and a form of contrived speech which is only for the members of the guild, as it were. Tradition may be formally accessible but still in fact esoteric and administered only by a minority. Generally, tradition may be professionalized or it may rest with the people at large, as in the case of fairy tales. (In the latter case, by the way, may we reckon with more control and greater stability because tradition is common knowledge or rather with more confusion as a result of wider diffusion and lack of authority?) Of course, tradition exists at many levels. A most interesting problem in the study of oral traditions is the interaction between the poetic, 'high' varieties of tradition, say in epic and lyric poetry, and the 'popular' versions in prose or simple song which would be told among the common folk.

Any comparative discussion of oral traditions and any exploitation of historical or ethnographical material should first refer to a list such as the one given above. We never deal with oral tradition 'in general' but always with traditions which may be specified with reference to genre, shape, status, mode, competence, etc. Only when we have stated the specifications, can we see what we have got and how it compares with other traditions.

5. Stability and Reliability

How well is tradition preserved in transmission and how well does tradition itself preserve facts?¹ One basic insight is that tradition is upheld through 'creative reconstruction' and not by exact recall (see Goody 1987: 167-90). Finnegan (1988: 69) lists first among the misleading popular notions about non-literate cultures

the idea that *oral* literature, just by being oral, is handed down word for word over the generations. Now there are a few cases where—it seems—this is indeed done (though more likely over the years than over generations), but by and large the most striking characteristic of oral as opposed to written literature is precisely its variability.

In some genres modifications and change seem, so to speak, to be programmed. In the Greek epic the singer is committed to the 'facts' themselves. In reality the singer is of course dependent, almost wholly dependent, on tradition, for his material no less than for his craft. But in principle he is not handing on the 'tradition' about something, but presenting the very 'facts'. The muses—that is, his 'memory'—take the poet to where the action is and vouch for his version of the story. In a certain sense the poet bypasses tradition to get to the facts. The singer is not using 'sources'; he has internalized tradition and so has the source of song in himself.

His memory is not of any single previous telling but of an undefined entity which is his experience of all previous tellings he has either heard or made himself. We can never grasp all the tellings that would enter into the remembering process, especially since remembering and creating and recreating are all tied together in the act of telling, which is really never retelling, but always telling. (A.B. Lord 1985: 57)

In a sense, the teller is above the tradition, even if dependent upon it.²

For the audience this telling is the tradition. The audience no less than the singer or teller of tales will often wish that familiar material is presented in a novel and superior way. From mediaeval Norway we hear that Sturla Tordsson in 1263 told a saga to King Magnus the

1. I have touched upon these matters several times above.

2. In certain Asian traditions it seems to be a hallmark of the more experienced performer that he exploits more freely the ability to express the same meaning in varied form (Finnegan 1988: 169, with further references).

Lawmender and his men 'better and more knowingly than they had ever heard it before'. In epic narrative generally, great variability occurs and 'innovation by performers is admired' (Vansina 1985: 25).¹

There are indeed cases where the intention of the performer is to deliver a message or to sing a song 'word for word'. But in actual fact that is not what happens: 'they add, or they make mistakes, and they forget' (A.G. Lord 1960: 27). Generally speaking, in an oral culture people have no adequate idea of what a 'word' is, as an abstract entity, out of context; and while they may produce, for example, epic verses proficiently, they are puzzled when they are asked to define this entity. For them, a 'word' is only a part of a larger complex of sounds (A.G. Lord 1960: 25; Goody 1987: 115).²

On the other hand, word for word (or sound for sound) memorization also occurs. This should not, however, be confused with premeditation as opposed to improvisation. When Yugoslav singers prefer 'to have a day or so to think the song over, to put it in order, and to practice it to themselves' (A.G. Lord 1960: 26); or when a poet in Rwanda sits on a hill 'mulling over his compositions for hours, presumably day after day until he felt they were perfect' (Vansina 1985: 12); or when Somali poets are said to memorize their poems, even those that take several evenings for a complete recital (Finnegan 1977: 74), we learn something about what happens in the process which spans the time

1. See also Goody 1987: 104 on the Bagre of LoDagaa in Africa. In the Pacific 'the general picture that emerges certainly throws doubt on earlier assumptions about age-old communal transmission through the ages, with no part left to the individual but memorisation, and fits reasonably well with the currently accepted view, that the individual narrator is in fact responsible for the final composition of the story (at least in large part) when he is actually performing it for its audience' (Finnegan 1985: 131).

2. Short of absolute identity, what are the criteria for 'sameness' anyway? When examining the different versions of the White Bagre recited by Sielo in 1975, Goody was struck by the similarity between them while his African collaborator Gandah was surprised at Sielo's inconsistency (Goody 1987: 87, 167-73). There is a very instructive confrontation of views in Smith 1977 and A.B. Lord 1987. Examining four narrative passages from four separate performers of the Pabuji epic of Indian Rajasthan, Smith (1977: 146ff.) came to the conclusion that 'the similarities are far more profound than the divergences'; Lord in his rejoinder (1987: 66-67) admitted the existence of 'a more or less stable core' but saw this as exactly the opposite of a 'fixed memorable text'. From Southern Africa there are reports that sixty per cent correspondence between different versions of a song was achieved (see Ong 1982: 62-63).

from the conception until the performance of the final product (and something about mental ability and capacity) but nothing really about how this individual version relates to tradition.¹ Examples of real rote learning and verbatim repetition of oral traditional messages are hard to come by. As we have already seen, what people think they do may not be what in fact they do. Vansina reports the learning by rote of a song whose original undoubtedly 'was composed at one time by a single singer' (1985: 48-49); the poem turns out 'substantially the same' and some differences 'may be negligible'; but even so, the length of the five full versions on record varies from 396 to 441 verses. An instance of verbatim repetition seems to be the 'lengthy' magic puberty rite formula worded in exactly the same way in 1970 and 1979 by a puberty rite specialist among the Cuna off the Panama coast (Ong 1982: 62-63). In Hawaii, early in this century, a hymn of 618 lines was recorded which was identical with a version collected on the neighbouring island of Oahu. 'Certainly this is remarkable, at least if we are certain that one of the performers did not have access beforehand to the written version of the other one.' It may be relevant to know that it was believed in Hawaii 'that a single mistake in performance was enough to strike the performer dead. This implied that when a performer was not struck dead his performance had to be correct' (Vansina 1985: 41-42). The former point reminds us that *writing* may be involved when 'texts' begin to be identical. The latter point reminds us that the culture in question did have an idea of 'correctness', but also perhaps that people had some idea of how problematic it is to check verbatim accuracy in an oral culture. Verbatim memorization is often not understood, seldom aimed at and hardly ever achieved in oral cultures. If it is aimed at and achieved, it seems to go with ritual contexts and metrical form. The idea and the ideal of verbatim memorization, along with the means to check it meaningfully, establish themselves only when writing has made the

1. Similarly, that much poetry in the Pacific 'is composed *prior* to performance, depends for its performance on a fixed and memorised version and *does* involve the concept of a verbally "correct" text' (Finnegan 1985: 129) tells us something about the relationship between performer and product, but very little about the relationship between product and tradition. For a highly instructive example, perhaps relevant to Greek choral lyric poetry, of how communal dance-songs are produced and rehearsed in an oral context, see Finnegan 1985: 135 on the Fijian *mekes*.

text available as an object and a fixed entity outside and independent of the mind.¹

Reliability

I said above that in the Greek epic at least the idea is to be true not to tradition, but to the 'facts'. The quotation marks are essential, for the 'facts' of the narrative soon part company with the facts of history. The distortions in oral historical traditions are of many kinds and occur for a variety of reasons. Often what is preserved beyond the story that encroaches upon it is only 'the large events in the background' and perhaps the name of the protagonist.² Everything else, the *personae*, the conflict, the manners and the general historical background may be wrong altogether. It has been shown by Henige (1974) that no reliable chronology whatsoever can be built on the basis of the data in an oral tradition. So to link tradition to historical facts and to elicit historical facts from tradition is a very difficult task. I will here only draw attention to one helpful discussion (by Davies 1984) of what criteria may be usefully applied in the 'rehistoricizing' of tradition.³

1. As a minimum requirement the evidence from *Realien* should be compatible with the story. In the case of Troy, archaeology at least testifies to a destruction; whether it was due to 'the Trojan war' is a quite separate question. Also the evidence of dialect, language, custom and cult should be compatible with the story. This means that, for example, names and religious practices would have to fit into the

1. The Vedas have become a special item in the discussion about verbatim or at least 'faithful' oral transmission without 'significant alteration', which are the slightly less absolute claims that Parry 1989 makes for them. The traditional view on the oral transmission of the Vedas from teacher to pupil as 'a process involving the endless repetition of each verse until it has been completely mastered and an elaborate system of mnemonic checks and phonetic rules (*vyasa siksa*) designed to ensure the exact replication of the proper sound' (Parry 1989: 50) has been challenged by Goody (1987: 110-22) because both the idea and the technique of learning the Vedas by heart seems to involve a written text and a form of linguistic analysis which can only be carried out in writing. On the influence of writing and the written text on oral tradition, see further section 6 below.

2. See the discussion of oral heroic tradition by Hainsworth 1984.

3. Davies 1984 is concerned primarily with the *Iliad* and the question of the historicity of the Trojan war, but he also uses Herodotus's story of the founding of Kyrene. I summarize and give some comments.

geography and ethnography of the region. Similarity does not necessarily involve continuity; for example, names and cults may have been introduced into the region under the influence of the story in question.

2. There should be no anachronism structural to the story and also no counter-factuals. The story should develop according to conditions in the real world, with no monsters or other supernatural beings integral to the plot. Those are obvious obstacles to the historicity of the *Song of Roland* on the one hand and of *Beowulf* on the other.

3. The imputed historical kernel should belong to the class of events which comparative evidence suggests survive best in memory, viz. major single events in the public domain. Stories which concern the experience of an individual in a private or personal context will be unverifiable by external evidence. The imputed historical kernel should also describe a form of purported historical action of which other examples can be thought to exist. This seems to me to be a more difficult criterion. It would speak for the historicity of the kernel of the *Iliad* that it belongs to 'a series of aggressive enterprises'. But how close should such examples be? (See Hainsworth 1984: 113-14.) And if the series 'makes possible kinds of analysis which for a one-off event would be purely gratuitous' (Davies 1984: 99), would not the series rather speak for adaptation and even invention according to an existing type? The singular event in 'factual criticism' may perhaps be compared to the *lectio difficilior* in textual criticism.

4. The story should if possible be supported by independent documents or by traditions from outside the culture concerned. It should be possible to point both to an institutionalized social context in which the story could have been transmitted and to a group of persons who had an achievable interest in its continued transmission. To be preserved, stories must have a function. On the other hand the story should not be either obviously aetiological or transparently created to fulfil certain social or literary purposes.

Of course the above list is not equally relevant to all kinds of traditions based on history. But it challenges us to make explicit and to systematize our own criteria when we discuss the likelihood of an element in tradition being factual and historical.

6. Writing

Writing has implications both for the storage and for the communication of messages. Writing bestows upon the message a new presence in the world, as visible signs on some material object. The message achieves a new form of permanence. It becomes fixed. It is available for critique and criticism independently of the memory and of any communicative situation. We may re-read the message and come back to it for control and comparison. Through the written text the past is separated from the present and the sender from the receiver. But writing is also a unifying force. It establishes a link between past and present. It reaches out in time and space.¹

But every society is literate in its own way. And what is more, no

1. The discussion both about the more global and about the more specific implications of literacy is beyond the scope of this paper. For what critics have termed 'the autonomous model', implying that writing itself is conducive to certain changes both in *psyche* and in society, see Goody and Watt 1968; Goody 1977, 1986, 1987; also Havelock 1978, 1982; and Ong 1982. For 'the ideological model', which stresses that the consequence of writing is determined or rather conditioned by political, social and ideological factors, see, e.g., Pattison 1982; Street 1984; and Finnegan 1988: 139-74. Discussion relating to ancient Greece appears also in Andersen 1987, 1989; Detienne 1988; Thomas 1989; and Kullmann and Reichel 1990. I would like to draw attention here to an aspect of the problem which has been treated by Rösler (1985, 1983) and which is of particular relevance because it concerns the 'truth' of the message. Rösler takes as his point of departure the function of oral poetry like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* which represents the past exploits and the present ideals of a culture. It has to be taken as true and accepted as valid to fulfil its function; what it says is part of what the culture is. With writing there emerges an enclave of literature within the culture, a body of texts which are there and may speak to us also out of context, when they are not any longer fulfilling any immediate cultural function. So it becomes possible to confront the message as such, as it were. It must no longer be true and accepted. Finally, when reading becomes the mode of appropriation of a text, the receiver becomes an active participant and even a co-creator of the message by the act of reading. At that stage you can have 'fiction'. Plato's hostility to poetry may partly be explained by the lack of such a concept which could have given poetry its own *raison d'être*. Instead poetry for Plato 'had to' be true and consequently came into conflict with philosophy. Only with Aristotle did poetry come into its own as a *different* means of grasping truth. The emergence of prose texts should also be mentioned here as a part of the process of literarization. Prose contributes in its own way to 'the separation of the knower from the known', to use a phrase of Havelock's (1963: 197).

one society is only literate. To say of classical Greece that 'the old orality was being transferred into a book culture' and that 'orality was superseded by writing',¹ immediately calls for qualification. Orality and literacy are alternative modes of communication. But the latter never *supplants* the former, it only *supplements* it. In a certain sense, however, it may be said that literacy *superimposes* itself upon orality. It places orality within a new cultural totality. Thereby the status of orality and the meaning of oral tradition are changed. The change is—briefly—that from a central to a marginal status, from universal acceptance to popular appeal. Oral tradition no longer sustains and permeates the culture as a whole.

On the other hand the significance of writing within a culture depends on several factors, for example, on the kind of *writing system* employed. The alphabet seems to represent a turning point in the spread of literacy. The impact of literacy also depends on the *technology of text reproduction*. The printing press is the watershed when it comes to the multiplication and diffusion of texts. The *format of the text* is also a factor to be considered. The cumbersome papyrus rolls of antiquity probably made people reluctant to look up a passage; they preferred to quote from memory. The primary domains of literacy may be very different in different cultures. In the ancient Near East it was trade and administration, in early Greece poetry and private life (Powell 1989). Among the Jews the word of God was written down, while in Greece the domain of religion and cult was kept almost clear of texts. Then there is the issue of the *uses* of the texts. Sometimes the written texts of a culture are guarded by a select group and learnt by heart. Even if the readers in a society as a rule far outnumber the writers, the readers may not be very numerous either. I am thinking not so much of the fact that texts normally are read aloud and taken in aurally, but rather of the much simpler fact that many texts are not much read (or heard) at all. Even for classical Athens where the very numerous public inscriptions have often been taken to indicate a highly 'literate' society, it has with good reason been doubted that inscriptions were primarily reading-stuff at all; they were monuments to be seen rather than texts to be read.² Partly as a result of the above factors, *attitudes* to texts may vary widely from one culture to another

1. See Rösler 1985: 259, 263.

2. See the discussion in Thomas 1989: 45ff.

and different options may be exercised. The more numerous the texts, the more heavy the impact of literacy—or the less weighty the written word. Scarcity of texts in a manuscript culture may give the written word a particular status—or it may make people reluctant to commit themselves to writing. While for us writing may have certain obvious advantages, illiterates sometimes nourish very strange ideas of what writing is for.¹ To make just one more point, the *consequences* of literacy, especially if it is alphabetic and widespread, may be claimed to be enlightenment, individualism and democracy; but it may equally well be argued that writing makes possible more complete manipulation and stricter authority and control. Writing is an enabling factor the significance of which is determined by political, social and ideological factors no less than by material and technological ones.

Oral Tradition and Writing

Just as there are many degrees and varieties of literacy so there are many kinds of passages from and interplay between oral and literate tradition. In a contemporary context in the Pacific, Finnegan (1988: 110-22) singles out the following three models as particularly relevant. First, there is 'overlap' between the written and the oral mode, for example, when forms originally composed in an oral context come to depend partly on writing for their circulation and transmission, or when note-books are used as sources for oral dictation; on a somewhat different level there is the *intrusion* of written material into oral tradition, as in the case of stories from the Bible which have intruded into the traditional poetry of Pacific peoples. This is very close to the second model, that of 'the written origins' of traditions often held to be oral and by implication age-old both by performers and audience and by recent investigators from the West. It seems in fact that elements from a written, foreign tradition are very easily taken over into the oral tradition. Such has been the case with the 'Kaunitoni myth' in Fiji, which, as it has turned out, has no basis in tradition but is a creation by literate members of the culture of the late 19th century on the basis of current anthropological and historical speculation about Fiji origins. What we have is a case of 'the establishment of an oral tradition authenticating the teachings of mission schools' (Finnegan 1988: 115).²

1. See Holbek 1989.

2. Finnegan quotes from France 1966.

The third model again is only slightly different; it is that of feedback from written sources into oral tradition. Once more evidence from the Pacific seems to bear out that oral tradition is extremely adaptive and prone to integrate elements from foreign cultures and written sources. European folk-narrative research seems also to have shown convincingly that there is a very lively interchange between oral (folk) and literate (art) tradition, not only in the sense that oral tradition has been elevated into literature but also in the opposite sense that much folk—and so presumably old—tradition turns out to be oral adaptations of literary works, sometimes from the classical tradition, sometimes more recent.¹ One may indeed ask, with Finnegan (1988: 141-42),

how useful is this binary typology [sc. of literacy and orality] when it turns out that most known cultures don't fit? In practice a *mixture* of media (oral and written) is far more typical than a reliance on just one, with writing being used for some purposes, oral forms for others. . . This kind of mixture is and has been a common and ordinary feature of cultures throughout the centuries rather than the 'abnormal' case implied by the ideal types model. . . It is the 'mixed' rather than the 'pure' type that provides the typical case and the available evidence for analysis.

The oral tradition in a culture which is no longer fully and solely oral must always be studied in relationship to the literate elements of that culture. Literacy may influence the form and content of the oral tradition; it certainly has implications for the aspirations and meaning of the oral tradition within the culture as a whole. Still, if we simply ask what happens to oral tradition when it encounters writing, the first answer which comes to mind is, 'nothing happens'. Oral tradition continues unabated and essentially unaffected. From the oralist's point of view, nothing much has changed, except that the intrusion of literacy has led to the petrification of segments of tradition at the periphery. It is important to realize that in a still essentially oral culture, tradition does not strive towards transcription. The written text is not considered as some sort of goal. It is not so much that people 'prefer' orality, though some may be aware of certain disadvantages of the written word.² Orality is simply normal. As we shall see, it may also

1. A good case study is Fehling 1977.

2. Criticism of writing and idealizing of the spoken word are well known from antiquity (Plato), the Middle Ages and even later. To take law as an example, 'For a simple person it is a strange thing that all law should exist in books, and not where

be normative, in the sense that oral format and oral freedom mark the written text as well.

But when oral tradition encounters literacy, one may also say, 'something happens'. Even when oral tradition thrives, the surrounding literate culture may make its impact because it somehow conveys the ideal of a finite and fixed text. Verbatim oral transmission can and may become the ideal. The message—for example, a story or a genealogy—may be influenced by the mere fact that such a thing as a written text exists, not even a written text of *that* story or *this* genealogy and by the fact that a genealogy can be charted out graphically and consistently. Just as cognitive operations and forms of knowledge which are developed through literacy (systematic classification, syllogistic reasoning) may influence and dominate people who are themselves unable to read, so literary forms and ideals may set their mark on oral traditions even when they themselves are not written.¹ Gerhardsson (1986: 32-33) has stressed that the society where Jesus appeared was no pre-literate society, but 'influenced by the written word' in a number of ways so that 'the verbal Jesus-tradition was at no stage pure "orality" in the meaning folklorists give the term'. It is basic to the understanding and evaluation of early Christian oral tradition that it exists within a culture with strong literacy as well as vigorous orality.

Oral Tradition into Writing

When oral tradition encounters writing something else may also happen, viz. it gets written down. We may distinguish between those recordings which are 'internal' in the sense that they are arranged and

God has planted it—in conscience and public opinion, in custom, and sound human understanding. The positive written law brings with it learned lawyers and scholars, cut off from the people.' In contrast to codified law, customary law 'quietly passes over obsolete laws, which sink into oblivion, and die peacefully, but the law remains young, always in the belief that it is old. Yet it is not old. . . . Statute law, on the other hand, cannot be freed from the letter of legal texts, until a new text has replaced the old one, even though life has long since condemned the old text to death; in the meantime the dead text retains power over life.' So Kern 1939: 178-79 as quoted by Goody 1986: 164.

1. See Goody 1987: 114, 96-100, with interesting speculations on Homer as the oral poet *par excellence* because he is somehow influenced by writing and is working in the vicinity of dominant literate traditions.

executed by and for the group which lives with the tradition, and those that are 'external', the extreme case being recording by fieldworking folklorists. There is a paradox here in that the latter kind of recording, at least with modern technical equipment (such as tape and video recorder), may be able to 'catch' the tradition in a more authentic way than the former kind. For when tradition enters the domain of writing, it may be deeply affected by the employment of the new medium with all that it may represent in terms of technical facilities and cultural connotations. The communicative situation changes, and the aspirations and models may become quite different. For the fact that transcription leads to transformation I cite two examples, one ancient, one recent. In a discussion of literacy and religion Goody (1986: 39) writes,

The form in which we have the Mesopotamian myths is certainly not that of oral recitation. In their written versions the stories 'represent the most obvious and cherished topics for the literary creativeness of a civilization. . . These literary formulations', writes Oppenheim, 'are. . . the work of Sumerian court poets and of Old Babylonian scribes imitating them, bent on exploiting the artistic possibilities of a new literary language' (1964: 177), with all its 'archaic' and learned artificialities. We are clearly dealing, as so often with what are presented as the products of oral culture, with a distinctive literary treatment.¹

In 1971 the Mwindo epic of the Banyaga was made available for all to read in the edition of Biebuyck and Mateene. Only after many attempts and much frustration did the editors find a skilled and willing informant, said to be the greatest contemporary performer in Nyanga country.

1. Similarly, 'The Old Testament does not represent the writing down of an oral religion so much as the creation of a literate one. That is not to deny that the "mythological" parts of Genesis did not have oral forerunners, nor that the genealogies of Numbers and the prohibitions of Leviticus are not in certain respects comparable to those found in non-literate cultures. Comparisons with tribal society are certainly relevant. . . But it is also clear that the uses and consequences of literacy were many and important. The freezing of the genealogies, the ordering of the Ten Commandments and the enumeration of the Hebrew tribes (Num. 1.1ff.), the detailing of the methods of constructing the temple, the collecting of proverbs and the listing of the Levitical taboos, all these were strongly affected by the use of writing' (Goody 1986: 39-40).

This poet repeatedly asserted that this was the first time he had ever performed the whole story in a continuous span of days—and even as it was it had to be spun out over twelve days, owing to the performer's exhaustion. . . . Biebuyck himself is convinced that in some sense there was an existent text there, waiting to be discovered, even if the only manifestations were shorter pieces which he regards as 'fragments of larger epic wholes', some as yet unrecorded. . . . But this is a text in a different sense from ones already crystallized in regular performance. Indeed, until Biebuyck and his assistants wrote it down, did the famous 'Mwindo epic' really exist as an epic text at all? (Finnegan 1988: 171, with further references)

In written form, the message or story will sometimes represent a synthesis or even a new creation, made up by the transmitter or by a collector or editor, rather than what has actually already been transmitted in any oral context.

In the two above cases we are dealing not simply with the writing down but with the *literarization* of oral tradition. We are dealing with 'literacy' in the sense which Goody gives to it when he explains the term as 'written traditions rather than script *per se*' (1987: 220-21). We have seen that oral tradition either may be (and in primary oral societies by necessity *is*) fully oral or may take on literate characteristics even as it remains oral, if it is surrounded by and under the influence of literate culture. Correspondingly, tradition which is written down may either preserve strong oral features (especially if it is not surrounded by literacy) or be fundamentally changed by being connected and attached to literate culture, as in the two cases just cited. It has been said that 'transposition of an oral prose tradition into a literary medium will always mean a profound change in attitude, which of course will be reflected in the style' (Holbek 1977: 118). But it is a matter of degree and of context. To take only the linguistic aspect of the process, while it may be true generally that people do not write in the way they speak, the concept of a 'written register' including, for example, more frequent use of abstract nouns, more complicated sentence structures and a greater choice of words (see Goody 1987: 263-64) may not be relevant to the assessment of the first fruits of literacy in every instance. There may be no models of writing available—apart from the oral format.¹ Even non-traditional material

1. To illustrate the point, one may compare the completely different context of incipient literacy in early Greek and old Norse culture. When the Greeks began to

may thus be cast in oral traditional format because the 'literary' idiom is 'oral'.

It is indeed difficult to establish criteria for what is 'oral' in a written text and conversely for what is due to writing in an 'oral' text. We shall never know what it was possible to achieve within a historical oral context, be it qualitatively or quantitatively. To take Homer as an example, it is almost a *topos* to say that 'aus der planvollen Anlage und Kunstform beider Epen, ihre schriftliche Fixierung postuliert werden muss' (Hölscher 1988: 24). On the other hand there are oralists who maintain that 'orality is not despicable. It can produce creations beyond the reach of literates, for example, the *Odyssey*' (Ong 1982: 175). We still have some way to go before we have agreed, reliable criteria to judge the impact of literacy. When we consider the relevance of writing to the written product, we should also bear in mind that 'writing' did not provide the world with lots of paper, pens and India rubber. Writing material was expensive and techniques slow. The new medium admittedly made it possible to compose in a new and more refined way, by re-reading, correcting and expanding the text. But the idea of writing drafts may not be congenial to early literate tradition. Material conditions, habit and values would favour the 'oral' conception and composition of a message and the writing *down* of the product.¹

Tradition in Writing

It takes a long time for a culture to exploit the potential of writing and to become 'document minded', as has been shown, for example, for mediaeval England by Clanchy (1979) and for classical Athens by Thomas (1989). Even when tradition has been written down and exists in written form, it does not stay clear of orality or change its nature completely. It is with some aspects of this situation that I am concerned in this section.

write around 800 BC, they started out on virgin soil with what amounts to a novel writing system and new areas of use; as the Homeric epics were written down, some Greeks were literate, but there were no literary traditions around. When the Latin alphabet came into use in the north from around AD 1100 and Sagas began to be written (down), not only the letters, but the literary traditions and cultural ideals of the Christian west were taken over and put their stamp on the culture. What exactly was the oral/literate matrix of the world of the New Testament?

1. See further Andersen 1989.

First is the familiar fact that the written message, by and large, was still listened to. Texts were written down not to be read, except by the very few, but to be heard. One important function of the written text was to serve as the basis for learning the message by heart. Texts thus were a vehicle for performance and oral delivery, in certain respects rather more like our gramophone records than our books. Transmission to the audience would still be oral–aural. It is a reasonable inference that the speaker in some contexts would exploit the oral situation and not be immune to innovations and interpolations.¹

Secondly, there is a fact which we have already touched upon above, viz. that oral tradition is not silenced by a written text. It may of course be influenced by or modelled on the written version; but equally well a persistent oral tradition may lead to changes in the written message, either in 'the' document itself, which may be altered, or in the succession of written texts. Thomas (1989: 155ff.) has demonstrated the interplay between oral and written tradition in the establishment of the genealogies of the great Athenian families. In a largely oral culture you do not simply 'check' tradition by consulting the written text, for the written text is not yet considered as a 'source'. Also, as has been mentioned before, consulting a text may be a rather cumbersome affair.

Thirdly, written tradition does not speak for itself. While elements of tradition may be recorded in writing and preserved through generations, there may be an oral tradition of interpretation and commentary to accompany it. This tradition may become crucial to the meaning of the message as time passes. Gerhardtsson (1986: 33-34) has given a vivid picture of this kind of interaction of text and oral tradition in Israel. The more impenetrable and overwhelming the written tradition, the richer and more important the oral tradition which serves it.

Fourthly, written tradition does not imply uniformity. I have had many occasions above to stress the fluctuating character of oral tradi-

1. The many actors' interpolations which have crept into the works of the Greek tragedians during post-classical times may be a special case since a certain updating and improvisation always go with dramatic performances. On the other hand, it is perhaps telling that even classical works by individual authors, whose texts were hedged by authorities and available as official copies in the state archives, were subject to so many alterations.

tion. With a written text one has at least one lasting specimen of a one-time message, that is, if the text survives intact through the decades. But even so the message may be falsified. From antiquity the *damnatio memoriae* is a case in point, which led to even that very durable medium for a message, the inscription on stone, being altered. The Middle Ages, as is well known, have been called the Age of Forgery, because of the proliferation of falsifications. Intentions apart, it is not in the nature of tradition in writing that it should remain fixed. Why should it? And how could it? One might even say that while oral tradition implies a measure of competent control because messages never are left to themselves but always live by transmission in face-to-face situations, a written text gets out of control proportionately with the spread of the message. This may be said to be the case especially as long as there is no 'literate consciousness' or 'document-mindedness' to match the written text. Written texts would be changed just as oral messages were changed. Again, intentions apart, every philologist can testify to the banal fact that texts get confused and corrupted even when the writers and scribes may be presumed to aim at faithful reproduction.

Fifthly (an elaboration on the previous point), in ancient Greece we may observe the tendency among historians tacitly—or sometimes polemically—to correct or replace an earlier author's version of some event with a new and different one. No need is felt to quote the predecessor's words nor any obligation to preserve them for posterity so that later investigators may be able to form an independent opinion. The ancient historian

does not lay out the whole proceeding before his readers. The more demanding he is of himself, the less he will do so. Herodotus likes to report the various contradictory traditions that he gathered. Thucydides almost never does this; he takes responsibility for deciding. (Veyne 1988: 10)

There is an interesting contrast to modern historians here, as Veyne goes on to explain:

Modern historians propose an interpretation of the facts and give the reader a way to verify the information and formulate a different opinion. The ancient historians take this burden on themselves and do not leave the task to the reader. This is their office. They discriminate very well, whatever one may say, between primary sources (eyewitness accounts or, failing that, tradition) and secondary sources, but they keep these details to themselves. For their readers were not historians, any more than

newspaper readers are journalists. Both kinds of readers have confidence in the professional.

So while the potential 'advantage'—from the modern, literate point of view—of keeping written texts in view remains unexploited, the present version of the story superimposes itself upon earlier versions and becomes the only valid version. In such circumstances we find ourselves still largely in an 'oral' frame of mind. What was said about the historians above may also be said with respect to the enormous output of philosophical and certain other kinds of literature in the Middle Ages. A book on some stock topic would essentially be just another presentation of the 'same material', even if it was superficially a work by a new and contemporary author. It would superimpose itself on its predecessors. As the written tradition grows it is transformed, constantly blurring the borderline between new and old, mine and yours—just as in an oral culture.

Sixthly, one may observe the opposite tendency to heed and hedge around texts too much. Texts may not at all lead to the criticism and the comparison, and so to the accumulation of scepticism and the progress of learning which some see as the blessings of literacy. This may be the case especially in an incipient literate culture where texts are few and so may achieve a special authority. Two examples from classical Greece should make this point clear. The first again concerns historians, who sometimes start their own narrative from the point where some predecessor has left the scene, perhaps incidentally and at some insignificant juncture. The story has already been told up to that point, and the existing version will have to do. The second is of scientists who rely on books rather than on autopsy, as we can see in certain cases with later authors in relation to Aristotle. May we say that writing preserves tradition by killing it?

7. Concluding Remarks

'It has long been appreciated that in literate cultures the most important aspects of life are communicated orally' (Rosenberg 1987: 75). 'All cultures are by definition oral cultures. When men learn to write they do not then forget how to speak' (Pattison 1982: 24). Orality is somehow culturally primary, just as oral societies are historically prior to literate ones. But our kind of culture is fundamentally dependent upon writing.

Illiterate members of a literate community may travel in a ship whose movements are directed by a pilot completely dependent upon graphic records and instruments for reaching his destination. At the individual level knowledge and skills are stratified and it may rest with a minority, a small minority, to widen the perspectives of a society, leading to trade, conquest, colonization or conversion. (Goody 1987: 252)

If orality is primary, literacy has the final word.

Just as even in our own time, the interaction of the many aspects of orality and literacy and the relative significance of the two modes of communication are anything but clear and simple, so for any historical society—be it, for example, in ancient Greece, in the biblical world, or in the Middle Ages—we have a long way to go before we have even collected all the elements which belong in the picture, let alone got the facts in the right perspective and the figures well proportioned. In this paper I have given a sketch and provided a framework.¹

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1. Let me end by a reference to Tannen's (1988) article on 'the commingling of orality and literacy in giving a paper at a scholarly conference'. The genre of lecture/paper/article is as good a basis as any for exploring the interaction of oral and literate features and strategies in communication.

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PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF ORAL TRADITION IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

David E. Aune

1. *Introduction*

Investigations into the phenomenon of oral tradition in the ancient world are ultimately stymied by the fact that all access to the subject is mediated through written texts. This means that suitably rigorous methods must be adapted and refined from various types of textual analysis and folklore studies which can then be applied to the secondary analysis of data from texts which would otherwise refuse to divulge their secrets. Modern folklorists now realize that the interaction of an oral performer and an audience is a critically important feature of oral genres, and that even a tape recorder cannot convey the gestures, facial expressions and social context which are an integral aspect of such performances. Indeed, folk tales are arguably closer to the dramatic genres (e.g. skit, one-act play, etc.) than to short stories in western culture (Jacobs 1959: 211-19). Further, no two oral performances are the same. In the study of Hellenistic oral tradition, alas, most of the critically important aspects of oral folklore are irretrievably lost.

The purpose of this paper is to survey scholarship on oral tradition in the Hellenistic and Roman periods as a context for understanding the use of oral tradition in early Christianity. The term 'prolegomena' in the title is not used lightly, for each major division of this paper deserves detailed discussion in its own right, and there are many areas of great importance which scholarship has scarcely touched. The intention of this paper is, furthermore, complicated by several factors:

1. Judging by the surprisingly meager bibliography on the study of oral tradition and transmission in the Hellenistic world, classical

scholars have shown little direct interest in the phenomenon of oral tradition during both the Hellenistic period (c. 330–30 BC) and the Roman period (c. 30 BC–AD 476). The primary reason for this state of affairs is simply that most classical scholars are blind to the issue, although it is also true that there is a paucity of data relating to oral tradition preserved in Hellenistic literature (the bulk of which is lost), and the data which is extant is often difficult to interpret.

2. The neglect of this subject, paradoxically, is due in part to the development and influence of the Oral-Formulaic School, which has focused on the phenomenon of orality from Homer to the fifth century BC, that is, on Greek literature of the archaic (c. 750–480 BC) and the classical (c. 480–330 BC) periods.¹ The discussion of orality versus textuality in the works of scholars who have been influenced by this school (e.g. Eric Havelock, Bruno Gentili) as well as others who have only tangential connections with it (e.g. Walter Ong, Marshall McLuhan) is often overshadowed by the *leitmotif* of the romantic valorization of oral culture as somehow more vital and authentic than literate culture. Ong, for example, has characterized oral discourse as ‘warmly human, participatory’, while written discourse is ‘sparse, abstract, immobile’ (Ong 1982: 166). This romantic conception of oral culture, despite denials, also permeates Werner Kelber’s attempt to formulate an ‘oral hermeneutic’ for New Testament texts, in contrast to the dominant ‘print-oriented hermeneutic’.² The incorrect implication is that when the transition was made from oral to literate culture during the fifth century BC, the role of oral tradition became negligible thereafter, and the Hellenistic period (c. late fourth century to late first century BC) became a ‘bookish’ period. That implication is patently false. By analogy, the fact that the study of American folklore is flourishing today as never before suggests that the dichotomy between oral and written culture has severe limits.

1. The history of research on the oral-formulaic theory is surveyed by Foley 1988, and an extensive bibliography together with a briefer history of research is available in Foley 1985. A competent evaluation of the oral-formulaic theory and the Homeric question is found in Jensen 1980.

2. Kelber (1980: xvi) disavows this romantic bias: ‘It was my intention to avoid being prejudiced in favor of either orality or textuality. When, for example, I refer to the spoken word as being innocent of the linguistic fall into written exteriority, I do not wish to romanticize orality at the expense of writing, but I describe writing as it appears to an oral mentality.’

3. The mutual influence of oral tradition and written texts in a literate society is a problematic issue which must be addressed. It is important to be aware of the fact that the dichotomy between oral tradition and written tradition is itself problematic. W.J. Ong (1967) has emphasized the phenomenon of *residual oralism* which he considers characteristic of literary texts which have gradually emerged from an oral-aural stage of culture. George Kennedy (1980: 109) has appropriated the Italian noun *letteraturizzazione* to describe 'the repeated slippage of rhetoric into literary composition'. Students of Greco-Roman literature are aware of the profound influence which oral techniques can have on written texts, an influence particularly obvious in the extensive use of speeches in Greek and Latin histories, and in the rhetorical structure of written texts. Following Gentili (1988: 4), oral literature has three aspects which may be differentiated, all but the first of which (in my view) must be present: (a) oral composition (whether improvisation or careful mental preparation); (b) oral publication (performance); and (c) oral transmission (preservation). The first aspect is dispensable only because written texts can give rise to oral performances and thereafter be transmitted orally.

Despite the imposing methodological barriers, which will be discussed in more detail below, there appear to be *three* categories of data relating to oral traditions in the Hellenistic world which have been preserved in written texts. These three types of data must be identified and analyzed if the form, content and function of oral tradition in the Hellenistic world are to be understood adequately.

1. General statements about oral tradition found in authors who treat the subject, however briefly.
2. The presence of oral patterns of composition in written texts.
3. Texts which are introduced by ancient authors as derived from oral sources and which exhibit formal features consistent with existence in a pre-literary oral form.

There are formidable methodological problems involved in the proper analysis and evaluation of each of these three categories of evidence for oral tradition in the Hellenistic world.

1. A major problem inherent in the first category of data, general statements about oral tradition, is the persistent dichotomy between the ideal and the real. That is, what authors say about the processes, functions and values of oral tradition may or may not correspond to

actual practice or to opinions and views which are in any sense representative. In Greek literature, however, authors (uncharacteristically) rarely provide theoretical discussions about oral tradition, its character and processes, except within very narrow spheres of application, such as historiography.

2. The second category of evidence focuses on the formal continuities between oral and written literature. Some of the more important characteristics of oral literature which have been suggested include: (a) brief sentences and parataxis rather than hypotaxis (Havelock 1986: 76); (b) absence of syntactic hyperbaton; (c) avoidance of idiosyncratic use of the first person; (d) use of clear, concrete language for the exposition of ideas immediately comprehensible to an audience and which would hold their attention. Among the more specific stylistic features of oral literature which have been suggested by scholars are:

- a. formulas;
- b. envelope patterns (Hieatt 1987: 245-58), or ring composition (Immerwahr 1966: 53-58; Beck 1971);
- c. recapitulations (Hägg 1971: 332);
- d. interruptions and asides (Scobie 1983: 37);
- e. stylization of introductions, epilogues and endings (Jacobs 1959: 220-24);
- f. number patterns;
- g. devices expressing distance, location or date (Jacobs 1959: 228-32);
- h. directional statements (Lang 1984: 1-5);
- i. tale-types (Aarne 1973);
- j. motifs (Thompson 1955-58).

However, since these features may characterize both oral traditions and written texts, they are less than adequate heuristic markers for discovering oral traditions behind written texts. One of the central problems is that oral traditions were widely used as models for written texts.

3. The third category of data is very complex since there is no absolutely certain method which can validate the results of research. Occasionally texts which may have had a pre-literary existence as oral tradition are identified as such by authors who insert such material in their written texts. This is signaled by ancients who consulted

informants (particularly historians such as Herodotus, encyclopedists such as Plutarch,¹ essayists such as Lucian,² and travel guides such as Pausanias) and introduced the gist of their responses with such formulaic impersonal verbs as λέγουσι, φασίν, or λέγεται, or such terms as ἤκουσα. Literary texts with a possibly pre-literary oral history may be identified by clues present in the literary context of the tradition, or they may be identified by the presence of features of oral tradition known from the modern study of folklore, summarized in (2) above.

2. *Defining Oral Tradition*

The phrase 'oral tradition' refers to fixed, standard forms which are orally or verbally communicated to members of a particular group. Oral tradition is one of the three focal concerns of folkloristics, which is manifested in

1. oral and verbal forms ('mentifacts' or oral literature);
2. customary behavior ('sociofacts' or social folk custom); and
3. material forms ('artifacts' or material culture).

1. Plutarch's retelling of the retelling of the myth of Isis and Osiris (in *De Is. et Os.* 355E-358E) is probably based on information derived from existing literature (now largely lost), and on interviews with the priests of the Egyptian cult of Isis in Delphi. Plutarch clearly intends to present a credible account of the Isis myth and its true meaning. To this end he frequently uses impersonal third person verb forms such as φασι (355D, 357A, B) and λέγουσι (356C). He reports alternate versions of various features of the myth with such phrases as ἔνιοι λέγουσιν (355E), and ἔντιοί φασι (356A, D, 357E), οἱ δὲ φασιν (357E, 358A), and ἕτεροι οἰόνται (356D).

2. Cf. Lucian, *De dea Syria*, in which the following formulaic words or phrases occur: λέγονται (2); λέγεται (13); λέγουσι (4 ['they say/but I think'], 6, 16, 17, 34); ἤκουσα (4, 12, 15 ['There is another sacred account which I heard from a wise man'] 27); 'one of the priests told me' (4). Majority versions can be indicated by οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν (8, 12), and minority opinions by ἔνιοι. . . λέγουσι (7). Lucian also reports several θαύματα or wonder stories (7, 8). Sometimes the impersonal third person λέγουσι has an explicit subject, such as 'a certain man of Byblos' (8). Lucian's attitude toward such oral traditions is skeptical (11; trans. Attridge and Oden): 'when I enquired about the age of the temple and whom they consider its goddess to be, I heard many accounts. Some of them were sacred, some profane, some quite fabulous. Some were barbarian, and some agree with what the Greeks tell. I will tell them all, but in no way do accept them.'

These three categories are transmitted by word of mouth and by customary example (Brunvand 1976: 2; 1986: 4-7).

Oral forms of folklore, our focal concern in this paper, have five characteristics (Brunvand 1976: 2; 1986: 7). They are: (1) oral content, (2) traditional form and transmission, (3) existence in different versions, (4) anonymity, or dissociation from a specific, named originator, and (5) tendency to become stereotyped or formularized in style and structure. Further, folklore in all three major categories *lives only in performance or through communication*.

There is an important sense in which oral tradition, the major concern of the folklorist, must be distinguished from two other relatively recent developments, oral literature and oral history, neither of which has a necessarily *traditional* character (Dorson 1976: 127-44). Oral literature has a primarily esthetic concern and is interested in *Märchen*, novellas and riddles, but particularly focuses on such poetic forms as epics, ballads, proverbs and songs. However, only if epics (for example), extemporaneously composed by bards, are transmitted by others is the label oral *traditional* literature valid. Oral history on the other hand is concerned with historical data and its accuracy, and focuses on such prose genres as reminiscences, recollections, anecdotes, reconstructions, testimonies, sagas, explanatory tales, genealogies, myths, legends (Dégh and Vászonyi 1976), memorates¹ and fabulates. While oral history is elicited by an interviewer, oral traditional history 'must contain sufficient intrinsic appeal to attract new hearers and retellers, for the folk historian transmits only what pleases his elders, his peers, and his juniors' (Dorson 1976: 141).

The problem of genre has become a central issue in modern folklore studies (Dégh 1972; Ben-Amos 1976: ix-xlv). One central issue is whether or not the classification of oral tradition should be based on *intrinsic* ethnic categories (i.e. those of the informants themselves), or on *extrinsic* analytical categories (i.e. those of modern

1. A 'memorate' is a first-person recital of an apparently personal experience which is in fact a personalized form of a traditional narrative form, and therefore frequently an *ad hoc* formation in both form and content. The form was identified by von Sydow (1934: 253-68) and sharpened by Dégh and Vászonyi (1974: 225-39), who propose that the narrator must know (or claim to know) personally the people who had the experience. When the first-person style of a memorate switches to the third person, the memorate becomes a fabulate.

researchers). One relatively simple way of categorizing the major types of oral folklore is the following (Brunvand 1986: 6):

1. folk speech (dialect, naming);
2. folk proverbs (traditional phrases and sentences);
3. folk riddles (traditional questions);
4. folk rhymes (traditional poetry);
5. folk narratives;
6. folk songs, ballads and their music.

Not all information derived from oral sources automatically qualifies as oral tradition. Oral messages which are repeated, that is, preserved and transmitted beyond the generation which produced them, become oral traditions (Vansina 1985: 13, 27). There are a number of types of oral tradition (Vansina 1985: 13-27).

Memorized Speech

Although the wording of memorized speech is supposed to remain unchanged from recitation to recitation, yet wording tends to vary over time. In pre-literate societies there is no standard against which the correctness of a recitation can be checked except others who have memorized the same composition. It is likely that memorized forms of speech, such as the Lord's Prayer, are more stable in literate societies. Frequently, memorized speech has poetic form which facilitates verbatim memorization. This is the only type of oral tradition for which archetypes can be constructed to reconstruct an 'original version'. Memorized forms of speech are not transformed over time but rather fall out of use. Forms typical of memorized speech include formulas, prayers, spells, poetry and songs. The first three use everyday language, while the last two use the special language rules which constitute poetry.

Accounts of Events

There is a tendency for accounts to fuse and acquire a stabilized form. An original version cannot be reconstructed, nor can it be assumed that there ever was an 'original' version. Accounts of events include:

1. historical gossip (news and hearsay generated as events);
2. personal tradition (reminiscences, anecdotes quickly lost);

3. group accounts (oral memories of groups, e.g., villages, kinship groups, expressing identity of group, substantiating rights over land, etc.);
4. traditions of origin and genesis (personal accounts, group accounts and traditions of origin, all part of a three-tiered whole);
5. cumulative accounts (lists or genealogies which need continual updating).

Epic

Since epics consist of lengthy poetic narratives made up of hundreds if not thousands of verses, exact wording in epics does not matter and improvisation is encouraged. Wording is totally free as long as form is kept; generous use of stock-phrases and formulas explains how bards are able to innovate within the boundaries of a defined form. According to Lord (1960), the epic poet *recalls* rather than memorizes the theme of his story; the song as creation is more important than the song as repetition.

Tales, Proverbs, and Sayings

No original form can be reconstructed. 'Every performance is a premier and appreciated as such by the audience' (Vansina 1985: 26).

3. *The Oral-formulaic Theory*

The famous Homeric critic F.A. Wolf (1985: 94-95) was so impressed with the truth of a view expressed by Josephus that he made it a pivotal piece of evidence for his analytical theory (*Apion* 1.12; LCL trans.):

Throughout the whole range of Greek literature no undisputed work is found more ancient than the poetry of Homer. His date, however, is clearly later than the Trojan war; and even he, they say (φασίν), did not leave his poems in writing. At first transmitted by memory (διαμνημονευομένην), the scattered songs were not united until later; to which circumstance the numerous inconsistencies of the work are attributable.

While it is not clear just whose opinion Josephus is repeating (perhaps that of the pedestrian Homeric critic Apion himself; cf. *Apion* 2.14), it is clear that Josephus intends to contrast the reliability and antiquity

of Jewish written records (*Apion* 1.37-43) with the comparatively unreliable and recent Greek use of writing by Cadmos of Miletus and Acusilaus of Argos in the sixth century BC (*Apion* 1.13). Pausanias too preserves a tradition that 'Peisistratus collected the poems of Homer, which were scattered (διδασκασμένα) and handed down by tradition (μνημονευόμενα), some in one place and some in another' (7.26.13; LCL trans.). These traditions are significant not only because they attest the oral composition and transmission of Homeric epic, but also (and perhaps more importantly), because they reflect the role which first and second century AD authors such as Josephus and Pausanias thought oral transmission could play in the preservation of traditional literature.

Since the 1930s, and in line with Wolf's view of the oral composition and transmission of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a major reorientation in Anglo-American Homeric scholarship has occurred which has important ramifications for our understanding of the role of oral tradition in the ancient Mediterranean world. In a number of studies from 1928 to his premature death in 1935, Milman Parry proposed that 'Homer' was illiterate and that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were the products of a long history of oral-formulaic composition (Parry 1971). The artificial language of the Homeric epics was the result of continual oral development over centuries. Wolf's view of the relatively late date when writing was introduced into the Greek world and, even more critical, when it became widely used (1985: 71-92), was confirmed by two influential articles which appeared in 1933 and 1938, in which Rhys Carpenter demonstrated that the Greek alphabet was invented not earlier than the latter half of the eighth century BC. In spite of widespread initial scholarly opposition, Parry's oral-formulaic theory now dominates Anglo-American Homeric scholarship (Foley 1985: 3-77). While many scholars accept what is now called the Parry-Lord theory in part, there is still a strong conviction that the Homeric epics 'could not have been created at all without the aid of writing' (Heubeck 1988: 12). Yet Parry himself at one point argued that the *traditional style* Homer used was oral, not that *Homer's style* was oral (1971: 321). Havelock has forcefully argued that the invention of the syllabic system 'provided techniques for recall of what was already familiar, not instruments for formulating novel statements which could further the exploration of new experience' (Havelock 1971: 7; 1986: 70). According to Havelock

(1971: 15), the alphabet 'provided an instrument in which for the first time the full complexities of an oral tradition could be adequately revealed, for in theory any linguistic noise could not be automatically recognized in transcription'. Literacy and cultural sophistication are not corollaries (Havelock 1971: 17). According to Havelock, the 'saying' ('the primary form of preserved oral speech'), like poetry, is an instrument for preserving and transmitting important cultural information (Havelock 1971: 28). Homeric epic constituted an enjoyable narrative in which social and cultural values and norms were taught in and through dramatized *action* rather than through the formulation of abstract ideas and principles (Havelock 1986: 77). The syntax of memorized speech, however, is unfriendly to principles, laws, or formulas, but appropriate for contingent actions and movements, and for concrete examples of the actions and reactions of specific people (Havelock 1971: 51). What is called correspondence or symmetry is really the process of continual anticipation (Havelock 1971: 53).

Although the concern of the oral-formulaic school centers on Greek literature of the archaic and classical periods, Parry and Lord tested their ideas on the coffee-house bards of modern Yugoslavia and modern Serbocroatian epic. Though little is known of oral-formulaic technique during the Hellenistic period, there is a tantalizing reference to this practice in the second century BC (Strabo 14.5.15; LCL trans.): 'Diogenes [of Tarsus, an itinerant philosopher] also composed poems, as if by inspiration, when a subject was given him—for the most part tragic poems'. This extemporaneous composition is an example of oral literature, for unless Diogenes's poems were transmitted by others, they cannot be categorized as oral *traditional* literature. We know from the report of Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 36.9), that the people of Borysthenes had a great interest in Homer.

And although in general they no longer speak Greek distinctly, because they live in the midst of barbarians, still almost all at least know the *Iliad* by heart (ὅμως τὴν γε Ἰλιάδα ὀλίγου πάντες ἴσασιν ἀπὸ στόματος).

Here ἀπὸ στόματος εἰπεῖν means 'to speak from memory' (Plato, *Theaetetus* 142D; Xenophon, *Mem.* 3.6.9; Plutarch, *Solon* 8); cf. ἀπὸ γλώσσης (Cratinus 122).

4. *Travel Guides and Local Oral Traditions*

One very specific setting for the transmission of oral traditions is the *explanations* which informed people provide for remarkable features in the landscape, for the origin and significance of monuments, works of art, and customs of various types. These explanations include popular etymologies, and explanatory glosses of obscure passages in traditions of various types. In the Hellenistic world it was a rare thing indeed if natives could not assign remarkable objects, ancient buildings, exceptional works of art, archaic rituals and peculiar ceremonies to specific origins in time by particular individuals on particular occasions (Myres 1930: 298).¹ The general term for such ‘explanations’ is αἰτίαι. The αἰτίαι became a literary form as well. Only fragments survive of the *Aetia* of Callimachus, in which the focus is on events and myths which explain religious customs and rituals, features of sacred statues and place names (Hutchinson 1988: 40-48). Because the explanations are so obscure and frequently without parallel in extant authors, some have thought that Callimachus used local historians as sources (Hutchinson 1988: 41). Spurious explanations (such as the explanation of the mark in the bedrock in the Erechtheum on the Acropolis at Athens as the mark caused by Poseidon’s trident) are called *iconatrophie* (Vansina 1985: 10).

Throughout the Hellenistic world, travelers were besieged by ‘tour guides’ (περιηγηταί) or ‘interpreters’ (ἐξηγηταί) ready to give tours and to provide for a price the necessary information to explain the origins and significance of various monuments, buildings and works of art (Casson 1974: 262-91). Lucian (*Amores* 8; LCL trans.) provides a glimpse into a business which has not changed much in two thousand years:

As I walked round the porticoes in the temple of Dionysus, I examined each painting, not only delighting my eyes but also renewing my acquaintance with the tales of heroes. For immediately two or three fellows rushed up to me, offering for a small fee to explain every story [ἱστορίαν] for me, though most of what they said I had already guessed for myself.

1. There are some instances in which local guides cannot satisfy the curiosity of Pausanias: 1.19.2; 1.31.5; 2.9.7.

This brief text reminds us that the subjects of ancient works of art focused on famous episodes of the mythical past, and for that reason there were important links between representational art and folklore in the Hellenistic world; the former provided a concrete setting for the preservation of the latter.

The Fountain of the Sun

The legend of the fountain of the sun is an extraordinary example of the longevity of the kind of local oral tradition perpetuated by travel guides over a period of many centuries. Herodotus, in discussing the geographical features of Libya, describes a peculiar fountain (4.181; LCL trans.):

They have another spring of water besides, which is warm at dawn, and colder at market-time, and very cold at noon; and it is then that they water their gardens; as the day declines the coldness abates, till at sunset the water grows warm. It becomes ever hotter and hotter till midnight, and then it boils and bubbles; after midnight it becomes ever cooler till dawn. This spring is called the spring of the sun.

Pliny the Elder mentions the fact that the Oracle of Ammon, at the Oasis of Siwah, and the Fountain of the Sun are both in the same district of Libya (*Nat. hist.* 2.106; LCL trans.):

The swamp of Jupiter Ammon is cold by day and hot at night. A spring in the Cave-dwellers' territory [central Sahara] called the Fountain of the Sun is sweet and very cold at midday, but then gradually warming, towards the middle of the night it becomes spoiled owing to its heat and bitter taste.

Andreas Kronenberg, who was traveling in the Sahara in 1954, reported the following story related to him by his guide (Kronenberg 1955: 74):

West of the Teda live people who do not know fire. They are called jezei-uni-da, sun-fire-people. They live around a big guelta [Arabic, 'water-hole'] into which the sun descends every night. Then the water gets hot and they can cook their food. Thus they only eat once a day.

Herodotus, Pliny and the modern Teda guide all refer to the same legend, though the ancient authors do not identify the reason why the spring is named Fountain of the *Sun*. Kronenberg, who heard other versions of the same modern version of the legend, observes that Amon Ra was the Egyptian sun god, and that the legend was not

confined to the Oasis of Siwah where the ancient oracle of Zeus-Ammon was located.

While the story of the fountain of the sun is a remarkable example of the tenacity of local legend, a note of caution is necessary. There have been several modern attempts to emphasize the continuity between ancient Greek mythology and modern Greek folklore (Lawson 1910; Kyriakides 1968; Megas 1970). Such studies, often motivated by nationalistic concerns, are problematic, as Richard A. Dorson suggests in his succinct review of research on this subject in his foreword to Megas (1970: xi-xlv).

First and Second Century Travel Guides

In many respects the most complete picture of the activity of the ancient travel guide is found in Plutarch's *De Pythiae oraculis*. According to *De Pyth. orac.* 395A (LCL trans.),

The guides were going through their prepared lecture [τὰ συντεταγμένα], paying no heed to us who begged that they would cut short their harangues [τὰς ῥήσεις; cf. 396C] and their expounding of most of the inscriptions [τὰ πολλὰ τῶν ἐπιγραμμάτων].

When a conversation among the dialogue participants is over, the guides continued their commentary (*De Pyth. orac.* 396C; LCL trans.):

A certain oracle in verse was recited, I think it concerned the kingdom of Argon the Argive, whereupon Diogenianus said that he had often wondered at the barrenness and cheapness of the hexameter lines in which the oracles are pronounced.

This notice suggests that travel guides were also prepared to recite oracles and oracle stories.¹ The oracle story in particular is a specific genre used in both oral and written settings, but has (to my knowledge) never been subject to scholarly analysis. There are several basic patterns in oracle stories. Often the tension in the oracle story is occasioned by an oracle which has apparently been falsified or whose

1. In a temple of Pan in Arcadia, a place where Pan reportedly gave oracles and the nymph Erato functioned as his 'prophetess', or oracular medium, Pausanias claims that 'They also remember [μνημονεύουσι] verses of Erato, which I too myself have read'. In this case oracles were transmitted in both written and oral form, though the latter may well have been dependent on the former.

meaning is misunderstood; in a thoroughly unexpected way, it is fulfilled. Those familiar with Greek and Latin literature will recall how frequently unfulfilled oracles serve as the exciting force in the construction of plots (Moore 1921). In certain respects, then, the oracle story is a microcosm of much larger compositions in which oracles play a critical role.

The guides also recounted anecdotes concerning remarkable events (*De Pyth. orac.* 397E; LCL trans.):

By this time we have proceeded until we were opposite the statue of Hiero the despot. The foreign visitor, by reason of his genial nature, made himself listen to the various tales, but when he was told that a bronze pillar of Hiero's standing above had fallen of itself during that day on which it happened that Hiero was coming to his end at Syracuse, he expressed astonishment [ἐθαύμασε]. Whereupon I proceeded to recall to his mind other events of a like nature.

Here the anecdote about a remarkable coincidence elicits the telling of a string of similar strange coincidences. The guide then pointed to a large rock which became the basis for an αἰτίαν, for the rock is identified as the very place where the first Sibyl purportedly sat and delivered oracles (*De Pyth. orac.* 398C):

On that rock it is said [λέγεται] that the first Sibyl sat after her arrival from Helicon where she had been reared by the Muses (though others say [ἐνίοι δέ φασιν] that she came from the Malians and was the daughter of Lamia whose father was Poseidon).

Here a large boulder receives mythological significance, and it appears that the guides also told alternate versions of the story.

Guides also told novellas (*De Pyth. orac.* 401E-F),¹ such as the one about the wicked stepmother who had the baker put poison in the bread intended for her stepson Croesus. The baker revealed the plot to Croesus and served the bread to the stepmother's own children. When Croesus became king he had a golden statue of the baker erected at Delphi. Since the statue of the Breadbaker was known from the time of Herodotus (1.51.5),² the story may have been told for six centuries before it was recorded by Plutarch (Winkler 1985: 235).

1. The text has a lacuna which several editors have filled with the phrase Καὶ ὁ θεὸς, ναί, ἔφη, thus transferring the novella from the guide to Theon.

2. A very similar story, this one involving poisoned wine, is told in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 10.4-5; cf. Heliodorus, *Ethiopica* 8.7.

Temple attendants also recounted stories explaining various distinctive features of the sanctuaries, like the erotic origins of a blemish on a statue of Aphrodite (Lucian, *Amores* 15-16).

Lucian (*Ver. hist.* 31; LCL trans.) describes a visit to the underworld in which 'the guides told the lives [βίαι] of each [of the various people they saw], and the crimes for which they were being punished'. This suggests that guides were quite prepared to provide thumbnail biographies of famous people represented in statues and paintings.

Lucian mentions an allegorical painting of Apelles in which a female figure representing Slander is accompanied by two others whom the travel guide explains as being Treachery and Deceit (*Calumniae* 5).

Pausanias Periegetes

Pausanias's *Description of Greece*, written after the middle of the second century AD, is the only travel guidebook to survive from antiquity. This extensive and fascinating work is of crucial importance for the study of oral tradition in the Greco-Roman world, since it clearly attests the vitality of verbal folklore in Greece during the second century AD. Though Pausanias was once thought to be excessively dependent on his predecessors, particularly Polemo of Ilium (second century BC), a comparison of Pausanias with the fragments of other periegetic literature, together with the evidence provided by modern archaeological excavations, has demonstrated convincingly that Pausanias wrote from personal observation as well as from research (Habicht 1985: 165-75). While most other periegetic literature focused on a single building, city or region, the distinctive feature of Pausanias's work is the fact that it was his intention to describe *all* of Greece (πάντα τὰ Ἑλληνικά; 1.26.4).

In order to write his travel guide book, Pausanias relied on what he had learned in school and what he could learn in libraries. He appears to have read widely, and frequently mentions specific authors he consulted: Thucydides (6.19.5); anecdotes about Anaximenes (6.18.2); the Attic history of Androtion (6.7.6). He also did research at many of the various sites he visited by interviewing local informants from various walks of life and by listening to and asking questions of the local travel guides. He refers some nineteen times to the ἐξηγηταί who served as local guides and provided running commentaries on various works of art, buildings and striking features of local

topography (Frazer 1897: VI, 69-70); while Plutarch preferred the designation *περιηγητής*, 'guide', Pausanias preferred the term *ἐξηγητής*, 'interpreter' (Winkler 1985: 234).¹ Upon learning that the building of the Pelasgian wall on the Acropolis at Athens was attributed to Agrolas and Hyperbius, for example, Pausanias wanted to learn more about them (1.28.3): 'Inquiring who they were, all I could learn was that they were originally Sicilians who migrated to Acarnania'. Artemis was called 'wolfish' in Troezen, but when he inquired the reason from the local guides, he says 'I could learn nothing from the guides' (2.31.4). Again in 5.15.7 he observes: 'Why they give the surname of Coccoca to Artemis I was not able to learn'. On the other hand, sometimes his inquiries met with success (8.6.1): 'Such is the genealogy of the kings of Arcadia as I ascertained it by careful inquiry from the Arcadians'.

Pausanias often refers anonymously to people from whom he obtained information. 'A man of Mysia said' (1.35.5); 'I have heard a Cyprian say' (1.42.5); 'I heard from a man of Byzantium' (3.17.7); 'an Egyptian assured me' (6.20.8); 'if the old man whom I questioned spoke the truth' (6.24.9); 'thus I have been told by a Phoenician man' (9.28.2); 'I heard this from a man of Ephesus, and I give his statement for what it is worth' (5.5.9); 'I have been told by a man who made a trading voyage to Temesa that the town is inhabited to this day' (6.6.10); 'so my Larisaeian friend told me' (9.30.9); 'I have heard a like story from a Phoenician man' (10.32.8) (Habicht 1985: 144-45).

Occasionally he names his oral sources (1.23.5; 2.37.6; 10.4.6). Pausanias used the works of the well-known geographer Artemidorus, to whom he refers simply as 'the man from Ephesus' (5.5.9). It is possible, though not certain, that Pausanias may have derived some of his information about specific localities from local histories, all of which have perished (Fornara 1983: 16-28).

Another main group of informants were the local guides who were found at the popular sites (Casson 1974: 264-67). In 2.23.6, Pausanias observes:

The Argive guides themselves are aware that not all the stories they tell are true; yet they stick to them, for it is not easy to persuade the vulgar to change their opinions.

1. 1.13.8; 1.34.4; 1.35.8; 1.41.2; 1.42.4; 2.9.7; 2.23.6; 2.31.4; 2.33.6; 5.6.6; 5.10.7; 5.15.10; 5.18.6; 5.20.4; 5.21.8, 9; 5.23.6; 7.6.5; 9.3.3.

Pausanias reveals the name of a few local guides, such as Iophon of Knossos, who was able to recite oracles in hexameter (1.34.4), and Aristarchus, a guide at Olympia, a man from a famous family (5.20.4).

Pausanias composed his travel guide in ten books, each focusing on a particular region or on contiguous regions of mainland Greece, usually beginning with an extensive summary of the political and military history of the area, followed by a shorter discussion of topography. His chief interest lay in describing the important buildings, monuments, and works of art, in providing explanations and background information about them, and also in explaining the origin and significance of distinctive religious customs and rituals. As in the case of Herodotus, Pausanias frequently uses such impersonal plurals as λέγουσι or φασιν ('they say'),¹ often varied by the passive forms λέγεται or φήμη ('it is said'),² which normally introduce the substance of statements made by informants. Sometimes these normally impersonal verbs have a subject, such as 'the Argives say' (2.18.3); 'the Messenians say' (4.2.2); 'the women said' (1.18.5; possibly attendants at the temple of Eileithyia); 'the natives say [λέγουσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι]' (2.11.5; cf. 6.6.4); 'the story [λόγος] of the natives [τῶν ἐπιχωρίων] about him is that' (7.23.1); 'the people of Pellene say' (7.27.2); 'the Arkadians say' (8.1.4); 'the Mantineans say' (8.9.1). Or even more generally, 'the Greeks say' that Myrtilus was the son of Hermes (8.14.10), when he reproduces a widely held view. In a phrase reminiscent of Herodotus (7.152.3), Pausanias observes λέγω δὲ τὰ λεγόμενα ὑπὸ Ἑλλήνων, 'I relate what is told by the Greeks'. Again like Herodotus, the verb ἤκουσα, 'I heard', occurs frequently with reference to oral testimony received from guides or local informants (1.17.4; 1.35.4; 2.5.1; 2.5.4; 2.5.5; 2.16.3; 9.30.9), sometimes emphatically: 'which I myself heard in Thebes' (4.32.5). The emphasis on *memory* is found several times, in phrases such as μνημονεύουσιν ὥς, 'they remember that' (6.4.8), or οἱ ἀρχαιότατα μνημονεύοντες, 'those who remember the more ancient matters' (7.18.2), or οἱ τὰ ἀρχαῖα μνημονεύοντες, 'those who remember ancient things', or παρειλήφμεν μνήμη, 'we receive by memory'

1. λέγουσι: 1.27.7; 1.28.5; φασιν: 1.27.10; 1.34.2; 1.37.2.

2. λέγεται: 1.19.3; 1.20.3; 1.21.1; 1.23.8; 1.26.5; 1.29.4; 1.34.2; φήμη: 1.26.6.

(5.13.7). The instances of the substantival participle οἱ μνημονεύοντες are particularly interesting since they suggest that particular individuals (who could perhaps include the professional guides) specialized in the learning, preservation and transmission of ancient traditions. Pausanias recognized the fact that 'Believe-it-or-not' stories were very popular and that they tended to attract embellishments in the telling (8.2.7; LCL trans.): 'Those who like to listen to the miraculous [μυθολογήμασιν] are themselves apt to add to the marvel, and soon they ruin truth by mixing it with falsehood'.

As in the case of Herodotus, a great deal of the material gleaned by Pausanias from oral sources clearly qualifies as oral tradition. Pausanias was, for example, aware of the fact that oral tradition existed in many variant forms, as he observed in 8.53.5 (LCL trans.): 'The legends of Greece generally have different forms [λόγοι διάφοροι], and this is particularly true of genealogy'. Elsewhere he contrasts the Theban with the Megarian accounts of the death of Alcmena and observes (9.16.7; LCL trans.): 'The Greek legends generally have for the most part different [διάφορα] versions'. Again, in discussing Hesiod, he observes (9.31.6; LCL trans.): 'So widely different [διάφορα] are the traditions of Hesiod and his poems'. One of the characteristic features of oral tradition is stereotypical form, and a number of oral genres are preserved by Pausanias, though it is likely that while he sometimes reproduced oral traditions in a relatively extensive form, often he preserved only an abstract or the gist of the original oral version. The genres include the following:

1. Oracles (8.37.12).
2. Oracle stories (4.9.4-10; 4.20.1-4; 4.32.5-6; 6.9.6-8; 6.11.4-8; 7.19.7-10; 7.21.1-5; 8.23.6-7; 8.24.7-10; 9.8.2; 9.30.9-12).
3. Thumbnail biographies, usually from the mid-career to the death of the subject, are occasionally elicited by statues of famous people. For example, Lysimachus (1.9.5-10.5), Pyrrhus (1.11.1-13.9), Triptolemus (1.14.1), Seleucus (1.16.1-3), Theseus (1.17.2-6), Philopoemon (8.49.1-52.6).
4. Myths are always circulated in variant forms, and many of these variants, which are local in nature, are known only from Pausanias. He occasionally reproduces two or more versions of a story (1.14.7; 5.2.3 [refers to two other

- accounts]; 6.20.16-19; 8.42.1-2); he uses the 'they say'/'but I heard' pattern to introduce two different accounts in 1.43.3.
5. Sacred tales, ἱεροὶ λόγοι, are myths which originally were part of a religious ritual (the story of Attis, 7.5.10-12).
 6. False etymologies (4.31.4; 5.5.5).
 7. Genealogies (8.6.1, referring to 8.1.4-5.13).
 8. Miracle stories, or θαύματα, distinguished by content rather than form (8.2.6-7; 8.22.7-9; 8.38.6; 9.19.5; 9.20.4).
 9. Proverbs or aphorisms (7.12.2).

5. *Oral Tradition and Hellenistic Historiography*

What has recently been designated Oral History, a movement 'founded' by Allan Nevins in 1948 (Dorson 1976: 129-30), focuses on a type of historical evidence frequently utilized by historians in the Greco-Roman world: interviews with those who were participants and eyewitnesses of events worthy of the historian's interest. Oral History, however, whether ancient or modern, can only be considered a legitimate part of oral tradition if it consists of oral communications preserved and transmitted beyond the generation in which they originated (Vansina 1985: 13).

Herodotus, the father of Greek history and author of 'the first great work of Greek prose literature' (Pfeiffer 1968: 29), appears to have derived roughly eighty per cent of his information from oral sources (Waters 1985: 76; Lang 1984: 5; How and Wells 1928: I, 27-29). Herodotus was primarily concerned with the collection and preservation of the oral traditions of Greeks and barbarians; criticism was a secondary issue (Momigliano 1966: 212). Herodotus feels obliged λέγειν τὰ λεγόμενα, 'to relate what is told' (7.152.3) whether or not the substance of the report was reliable (2.123.1; 3.9.2; 4.195.2; 7.152.3). According to 7.152.3 (LCL trans.):

For myself, though it be my business to set down that which is told me, to believe it is none at all of my business; let that saying hold good for the whole of my history.

In the course of his *History*, Herodotus frequently uses phrases such as 'the Persians say', or 'the Egyptians told me', or even less specifically, 'it is said'. In just three instances does Herodotus reveal the names of his informants, Archias of Sparta (3.55.2), Tymnes at Olbia (4.76.6),

and Thersander of Orchomenos (9.16.1). Herodotus uses the terminology of 'speaking' (λέγειν) and 'hearing' (ἀκούειν), yet he refers to his own composition as a λόγος, and various parts of it as λόγοι. Some caution must be urged in evaluating his terminology, since he occasionally uses φημί and λέγω of information gleaned from *written* sources (6.137 of Hecataeus; 4.13.1 of Aristaeas). Nevertheless his frequent use of λέγειν and ἀκούειν suggests that his sources were primarily oral. While he often identifies his informants (a complete list of 'ἐπιχόριοι-Zitate' is found in Jacoby 1913: 397-403), he also uses the λέγεται formula without naming his source (a list of such passages is found in Jacoby 1913: 399). This formula is used to introduce myths (2.182.2), anecdotes (3.34.2), unusual customs (4.176), and wonders (6.61.4). The formulaic character of Herodotus's citation of oral informants does not mean that he did not examine and compare oral informants (Hornblower 1987: 24-25).

One of the characteristic features of folk literature mentioned above is existence of a given oral tradition in many variant forms. Herodotus often gives variant versions of the λόγοι he relates to establish their relative value (Momigliano 1966: 213). Though Herodotus knows *four* different stories about Cyrus, he chooses to relate only the version he learned from 'the Persians' (1.95), in 1.96-130. When Herodotus says there is a *logos* to such-and-such an effect, he is probably referring to an oral source (Waters 1985: 77). Often Herodotus says he 'heard' such an account, and when he says 'there is another account current', he doubtless has *oral* traditions primarily in view.

While Thucydides uses sources, unlike Herodotus, he rarely names them (1.138.6; 2.5.5-6; 2.48.2; 3.88.3; 6.2.2). In addition, the documents he preferred to use were treaties rather than inscriptions and oracles. Further, he accepted the view of Herodotus that history must be based primarily on oral sources (Momigliano 1966: 214).¹ Though it can safely be assumed that Thucydides made extensive use of such oral sources (Hornblower 1987: 77-81), he rarely explicitly claims to be dependent on them (one exception is 6.55.1). Thucydides uses passive forms of λέγω, such as ὡς λέγεται, ὡς ἐλέγετο, λέγεται and ἐλέχθη, to introduce various kinds of information about which he is aware.

1. Momigliano's use of the phrase 'oral tradition' is imprecise, for he really means 'oral sources'.

When these reports deal with aspects of the Peloponnesian war, they tend to reflect his skepticism or uncertainty about their veracity (1.118.3; 2.48.1, 2; 2.57.1; 2.98.3; 5.74.3; cf. Westlake 1977: 346ff.). When Thucydides used such terminology to refer to the *past* he usually means the same thing by it as Herodotus, that is, while disbelief is not indicated nevertheless he cannot vouch for the truth of the information (Westlake 1977: 356-62). Though he is notoriously silent about his sources, it is known that he was present at the plague in Athens and when he was in command in Thrace (Gomme 1945: 28-29). Though Thucydides rarely admits to using oral sources, early in his history he has occasion to refer to Peloponnesian oral tradition (1.9; LCL trans.):

It is said [λέγουσι], furthermore, by those of the Peloponnesians who have received the clearest traditional accounts from men of former times, that it was by means of the great wealth which he brought with him from Asia into the midst of a poor people that Pelops first acquired power, and consequently, stranger though he was, gave his name to the country, and that yet greater things fell to the lot of his descendants.

Though Gomme (1945: 109) assumes that Thucydides here is referring to written sources, the language used suggests otherwise.

Several fourth-century historians and orators used passive forms of λέγω, either to indicate their dependence on a report by an informant (Xenophon, *Hell.* 2.3.56: a witty chreia spoken by the condemned Theramenes; 3.1.14: the assassination of Menia the female satrap by Meidias her son-in-law; *Cyr.* 1.2.1: folk songs about Cyrus) or to refer to the recent past without suggesting (as Thucydides sometimes does) that such sources are not completely reliable (Demosthenes, *Or.* 20.11; 20.73; 21.143-44; Aeschines, *Or.* 3.150 [ὡς λέγεται]; *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* 6.1).

Polybius is the only major Hellenistic historian whose work has partially survived (books 1-5 survive intact; books 6-39 survive only in fragments as excerpts and quotations). In discussing the best ways to gather data, Polybius emphasizes the function of the eyes and the ears, and quotes the saying of Heraclitus, 'The eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears' (12.27.1; Heraclitus frag. 15 in Kahn 1979: 106-107). Personal observation (αὐτόπτης or αὐτοθία) or actual participation in the events narrated is superior to 'hearing' (ἄκοή). The latter is of two types, the reading of books (probably because they were read aloud) and the interrogation of witnesses (12.27.3).

Polybius, though he preferred personal observation, used both types of evidence (4.2.2; LCL trans.): 'I have been present at some of the events and have the testimony of eyewitnesses for others'.

The tendency among historians was to focus on contemporary history, since the basis for historical documentation continued to be oral in character rather than archivist or based on documents. According to Momigliano (1966: 215):

The non-contemporary historian avails himself, as much as he can, of contemporary historians, not of documents. An oral tradition is definitely preferred, since contemporary historians who are the ultimate source to which one returns use for preference an oral tradition.

One of the second-century AD historians criticized by Lucian reportedly claimed that he heard a report of the strange death of Severianus from an eyewitness to the event (Lucian, *Historia* 25), an example of oral history. Another armchair historian, turning the famous saying of Heraclitus on its head, claimed that ὦτα ὀφθαλμῶν ἀπιστότερα, 'ears are more reliable than eyes' (Herodotus 1.8.2). Lucian also advises (*Historia* 47; LCL trans.):

He [the historian] should for preference be an eyewitness, but, if not, listen to those who tell the more impartial story, those whom one would suppose least likely to subtract [ἀφαιρήσειν] from the facts or add [προσθήσειν] to them out of favour or malice.

In the preface to the *De vita Mosis*, Philo of Alexandria was following the procedure recommended by Lucian, that is, he combined research into the written record with oral interviews (1.1.4; LCL trans.):

But I will . . . tell the story of Moses as I have learned it, both from the sacred books, the wonderful monuments of his wisdom which he has left behind him, and from some of the elders of the nation; for I always interwove what I was told with what I read, and thus believed myself to have a closer knowledge than others of his life's history.

The reliability of oral testimony here, however, is obviously nil and thus suggests the formal nature of this claim, which is a common topos of such historical prefaces (Aune 1987: 89-90, 120-21).

Papias of Hierapolis remains an enigmatic Christian scholar who was active during the first quarter of the second century AD. Recent research has shown that the surviving fragments of Papias reflect a considerable degree of rhetorical sophistication (Kürzinger 1983:

43-67; Black 1989: 31-41), and suggests that he thought of himself as a historian (Aune 1978: 79-82; 1987: 66-67). He wrote a composition in five books entitled *Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξήγησις*, 'Interpretation of the Logia of the Lord', which survives only in fragments.¹ Nevertheless the surviving fragments are important for our interest in oral tradition since they, together with the comments of Eusebius, reveal the author's *modus operandi* in compiling a work on the sayings of Jesus. An important fragment of Papias preserved in Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4 (LCL trans.) deals with the issue of oral sources:

But if ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I inquired into the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, had said, and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, were saying. For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice.

Eusebius then reiterates the above quotation in a paraphrase and adds a comment of his own (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.7; LCL trans.):

The Papias whom we are now treating confesses that he had received the words of the Apostles from their followers, but says that he actually heard Aristion and the presbyter John. He often quotes them [αὐτῶν μνημονεύσας] by name and gives their traditions [παραδόσεις] in his writings.

Eusebius then summarizes two of the *παράδοξα*, or incredible stories which Papias received from tradition (ἐκ παραδόσεως), specifically from the daughters of Philip about the resurrection of a corpse and how Justus Barsabas drank poison but suffered no harmful effects (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.8-9). Eusebius continues in *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.11 (LCL trans.):

The same writer adduces other accounts, as though they came to him from unwritten tradition [ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγράφου], and some strange parables [ξένας τέ τινας παραβολάς] and teachings [διδασκαλίας] of the Saviour, and some other more mythical accounts [μυθικώτερα]. Among them he says that there will be a millennium after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this

1. Funk-Bihlmeyer (1956: 133-40) has thirteen fragments; Körtner (1983: 43-71) has twenty-two fragments, while Kürzinger (1983: 89-138) has twenty-five fragments, including three from Armenian texts published by Folker Siegert ('Unbeachtete Papiaszitate bei armenischen Schriftstellern', *NTS* 27 [1981], pp. 605-14).

earth. I suppose that he got these notions by a perverse reading of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that they had spoken mystically and symbolically.

An account concerning the miraculous fecundity of the earth in the eschaton attributed to Papias in Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5.33.3,¹ finds close parallels in *1 En.* 10.19,² *2 Bar.* 29.5,³ and *Apoc. Paul* 22 (fourth century AD),⁴ and thus appears to be a type of eschatological folklore widely known in early Judaism and phases of early Christianity.⁵ Yet in Papias this eschatological fantasy was placed within a narrative context in which Judas Iscariot expressed disbelief.

1. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5.33.3 (trans. Cox): 'The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty meters of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me". In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions.'

2. *1 En.* 10.19 (trans. Knibb): 'And all pleasant trees they will plant on it, and they will plant on it vines, and the vine which is planted on it will produce fruit in abundance, and every seed which is sown on it, each measure will produce a thousand and each measure of olives will produce ten baths of oil'.

3. *2 Bar.* 29.5 (trans. Charlesworth, I, p. 630): 'The earth will also yield fruits ten thousandfold. And on one vine will be a thousand branches, and one branch will produce a thousand clusters, and one cluster will produce a thousand grapes, and one grape will produce a cor of wine.'

4. *Apoc. Paul* 22 (trans. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, II, p. 773): 'And the trees were full of fruit from root to tree-top. From the root of each tree up to its heart there were ten thousand branches with tens of thousands of clusters [and there were ten thousand clusters on each branch] and there were ten thousand dates in each cluster. And it was the same with the vines. Each vine had ten thousand branches, and each branch had on it ten thousand bunches of grapes, and each bunch had ten thousand grapes.'

5. While *Apoc. Paul* 22 could be dependent on book 4 of Papias's lost 'Interpretations of the Logia of the Lord' or on Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 5.33.3-4 (Körtner 1983: 101), it is probably a specific form of a widely disseminated tradition.

Irenaeus presents this as a teaching of Jesus, repeated by John, and it is finally preserved in written form by Papias (*Adv. haer.* 5.33.4).

6. *Oral Traditions and Religious Cults*

The use of oral traditions, including prayers, hymns and ἱεροὶ λόγοι, or sacred narratives, were integral features of Hellenistic religions. Though very little is known of the liturgies of such ancient cults, there are clear indications that certain rituals, consisting of words and/or actions, were thought inappropriate for transmission in written form. Pausanias, our primary source for many otherwise unknown religious customs and rituals, occasionally refuses to tell us all that we would like to know (5.15.11): 'The traditional words spoken by them in the Town Hall at libations, and the hymns which they sing, it were not right for me to introduce into my narrative'.

Oracles in particular were usually composed and delivered *orally* at Delphi by the Pythia, traditionally in hexameters (Plutarch, *De Pyth. orac.* 397C), and in poetic form also by the male priest of Apollo at Claros (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.54), and orally by a prophetess or promantis at Apollo's Oracle at Didyma (Iamblichus, *De myst.* 3.11).¹ The extemporaneous oral composition of some of the older poetic Delphic oracles probably has close connections with the oral formulaic composition which characterized the Homeric bards and Hesiod (McLeon 1961).

'Mysteries', according to Burkert (1987: 11), 'were initiation rituals of a voluntary, personal, and secret character that aimed at a change of mind through experience of the sacred'. While secrecy was an essential feature of many mystery cults (Burkert 1985: 276; 1987: 7), esoteric rituals and traditions in and of themselves do not necessarily qualify as oral tradition, since the lack of evidence makes it difficult to know precisely what form these rituals and traditions took. The rituals of mystery cults were often characterized as 'secret', i.e., ἄρρητος, 'not to be divulged', or possibly 'incapable of verbalization' (cf.

1. Fontenrose 1988: 55-56. On p. 85 Fontenrose observes, 'Lacking any evidence on how Didymaeon responses were spoken or composed, we cannot know what procedure was followed; but that the promantis spontaneously composed several lines of competent dactylic hexameter for each of several consultants in one session seems to be out of the question'.

Euripides, *Bacchae* 471-72; Plutarch, *Pompey* 24.5; the former meaning must apply to the phrase ἄρρητα ῥήματα in 2 Cor. 12.4). Yet initiates of various mystery cults only rarely appear to have formed stable communities such as θιάσοι or κοινά ('associations') which maintained esoteric traditions; devotees of Dionysus and Mithras constitute exceptions (Burkert 1987: 30-53). For such groups the 'main concern was not propagating a faith, but withholding the central revelation' (Burkert 1987: 45-46). Mystery cults usually had a central myth, rooted in oral tradition, which was recited and enacted (τὰ δρώμενα);¹ in either oral or written form it could be designated a ἱερὸς λόγος, or 'sacred tale' (Burkert 1987: 73-78). Examples of such sacred narratives include the myth of Demeter and Persephone narrated in the *Hymn to Demeter* (mid-sixth century BC; cf. Richardson 1974: 5-11), and the myth of Isis and Osiris (Plutarch, *De Is. et Os.* 355D-358E).² Though the issue is complex, the *Hymn to Demeter* appears to have been composed for oral recitation and exhibits a number of the techniques of earlier epic composition (Richardson 1974: 331-38). In a papyrus from the first century BC (P. Berol. 13044; Kern 1922: 119-25 frag. 49), the story of Orpheus is told in a prose version with quotations from the *Hymn to Demeter* (using the commentary style of the earlier Derveni papyrus), apparently quoted from memory but treated as a work of Orpheus as transmitted by Musaeus (Richardson 1974: 66-67, 77-78; West 1983: 24). Though the prose version diverges from the known *Hymn to Demeter*, that does not necessarily mean that the author used a different version of the *Hymn* than that known to us (Krüger 1938: 352-55). This papyrus strongly suggests that the *Hymn to Demeter* was circulated in a memorized version.

Many ancient writers who were on the brink of describing various aspects of ancient cults stop short of revealing anything very inter-

1. Cf. Pausanias 8.6.5, δρῶσι τὰ ὄργια τοῦ Διονύσου, 'they enacted the ritual of Dionysus'.

2. Plutarch's version of the Isis and Osiris myth, the most complete version found in any ancient source, is generally regarded by Egyptologists as accurate and based on reliable sources (cf. Hani 1976: 110-17, 467-72). The striking similarities between the myths of Demeter and Persephone and Isis and Osiris have encouraged theories of interdependence. According to Burkert (1987: 20), 'If there is any connection, the influence must have come from Egypt to Greece'. The opposite opinion is expressed by Hani 1976: 75.

esting. Plutarch's hesitancy is typical (*De Is. et Os.* 359C; LCL trans.): 'I pass over the cutting of wood, the rending of linen, and the libations that are offered, for the reason that many of their secret rites [τῶν μυστικῶν] are involved therein'. Again in *De Is. et Os.* 35 (364E): 'Let us leave undisturbed what may not be told [τὰ ἀπόρρητα]'. In the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the reader follows Lucius, who is being led by a priest of Isis, into the innermost sanctuary of the temple. The author then breaks in (11.23; trans. Griffiths):

You would perchance enquire quite eagerly, attentive reader, what was then said and done. I would tell you, if it were lawful; you would get to know all, were it lawful for you to hear. But both ear and tongue would incur equal guilt through such daring curiosity. Yet you are perchance racked by religious longing, so I shall not torture you with prolonged anguish. Listen then, but believe, for my account is true. I approached the boundary of death and treading on Proserpine's threshold, I was carried through all the elements, after which I returned. At the dead of night I saw the sun flashing with bright effulgence. I approached close to the gods above and the gods below and worshiped them face to face. Behold, I have related things about which you must remain in ignorance, though you have heard them.

Similar is Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 2.601-604 (LCL trans.):

Who would dare to publish to the profane the rites of Ceres, or the great ceremonies devised in Samothrace? Keeping silence is but a small virtue, but to speak what should not be uttered is a heinous crime.

Diodorus Siculus 1.27.6 observes that the Egyptian priests regard matters concerning Isis and Osiris (LCL trans.)

as a secret not to be divulged, are unwilling to give out the myth to the public, on the ground that perils overhang any men who disclose to the common crowd the secret knowledge about these gods.

A term with particular religious and esoteric connotations is that of the ἱερὸς λόγος, a 'holy book' whose contents cannot be disclosed to the uninitiated (Burkert 1972: 219-20). Hecataeus of Abdera reports that Pythagoras brought a ἱερὸς λόγος with him from Egypt (Diodorus 1.98.2; FrGrHist 264F25).

7. Memory and Rhetoric

Gorgias, the famous fifth-century BC rhetorician, reportedly furnished speeches to be memorized and recited by his students (Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 183b-184a). In general, however, students of the sophists were not taught to memorize entire speeches, but rather to use blocks of memorized material, or commonplaces, which could be variously arranged and used in a variety of situations (Isocrates, *Against the Sophists* 12-13; cf. Kennedy 1980: 28). One of the parts of each of the major types of rhetoric (epideictic, deliberative and judicial) was memory, along with invention, arrangement, style and delivery (Cicero, *De inv.* 1.9). The most extensive discussion of memory, or mnemonics, in ancient literature is found in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.28-40 (see also Cicero, *De oratore* 2.350-60; Quintilian 11.2.1-33, 40, 50-51; cf. Blum 1969). The mnemonic technique emphasized consists of an imaginary 'background' with various 'images' against that background with which students can associate the sequence of ideas and words in a speech.

In rhetorical education, oral exercises which emphasized memory were used (Quintilian 2.4.15; LCL trans.):

It is useful at first, when a child has just begun to speak, to make him repeat what he has heard with a view to improving his powers of speech; and for the same purpose, and with good reason, I would make him tell his story from the end back to the beginning or start in the middle, and go backwards or forwards, but only so long as he is at his teacher's knee and while he is incapable of greater effort and is beginning to connect words and things, thereby strengthening the memory.

While dictation was one method of teaching poetry to students, the method of ἀποστοματίζειν, 'to repeat orally, to repeat by heart', eliminated the need for any writing whatsoever in the learning process; the student would repeat a selection word-by-word and line-by-line after the teacher until it was satisfactorily committed to memory (Plato, *Euthydemus* 276D; Horace, *Ep.* 1.18.12-14; Bonner 1977: 177).

If we consider the relationship of rhetorical education to oral tradition in the Hellenistic world, however, we find that oral performance and memorization do not in themselves qualify as oral tradition. Only in the case of τόποι, commonplace themes, do we approach an area which may be regarded as oral tradition.

8. *Oral Traditions in Philosophical Schools*

The Hellenistic philosophical schools were relatively small, closed societies based on the ideal of friendship (Stoics and Cynics were exceptions). These schools produced esoteric writings intended for insiders only, and some exoteric literature, often written in the form of protreptic treatises intended to convert the reader to a particular philosophical way of life and thought (Diogenes Laertius 8.14). Though oral tradition began to be eclipsed by written literature during the fifth century BC, one sect, the Pythagoreans, and perhaps different Orphic groups as well, preserved secrets and doctrines orally (Kern 1922: 140-41; Notopoulos 1938: 481).¹ Early Pythagoreanism and Orphism are closely, perhaps inextricably, connected (Burkert 1972: 125-36), and the names Pythagoras and Orpheus are linked by Ion of Chios (died 422 BC), who claimed that Pythagoras was the actual author of poems using 'Orpheus' as a pseudonym (Diels-Kranz 1951: I, 379 [36B.1]; Diogenes Laertius 8.8; Clement Alex., *Strom.* 1.131; cf. Delatte 1915: 4-5; Burkert 1972: 129). While Orphic poetry, consisting primarily of theogonies and cosmogonies, was not widely distributed or popular, it does not appear to have been kept secret (West 1983: 79-80).²

There was widespread doubt in antiquity that Pythagoras had written anything at all (Diogenes Laertius 8.6), despite the enormous number of forgeries which were attributed to him. According to Diodorus (10.8.3; LCL trans.),

Many outsiders, being eager to know the cause, expended great effort on the endeavour, but no man of them was ever able to learn it. The reason why their system of instruction for this purpose was kept inviolate was that the Pythagoreans made it a fundamental tenet to put nothing on this subject in writing, but to carry their precepts only in their memory [διὰ μνήμης].

1. Though Notopoulos mentions the Orphics as a second sect which preserved esoteric doctrines, it is unlikely that such a single religious movement called 'Orphism' ever existed (Linforth 1941). While groups of Orphics apparently were active in Olbia and Tarentum, that still does not validate the generic use of the term 'Orphism' (West 1983: 1-3).

2. Yet the proem of the Derveni papyrus may have contained the command 'Close your doors, ye profane', i.e., what follows is for the initiated only (West 1983: 82-84; Kern 1922: 140 [frag. 59]).

Diogenes Laertius preserves the injunction of Pythagoras that disciples ought *μνήμην ἀσκεῖν*, 'to train the memory' (8.23), and the Pythagorean emphasis on memory and the memory exercises they reportedly practiced are described in Diodorus 10.5.1, and in greater detail in Iamblichus, *Vita Pythagorica* 164-66 (Diels-Kranz 1951: I, 467-68 58D.1). According to Plutarch, who saw a connection between the Pythagoreans and the Roman king Numa, the latter ordered that the sacred books (αἱ ἱερὰ βιβλία) he had written be buried (*Numa* 22.3; LCL trans.):

But since, while he [Numa] was still living, he had taught the priests the written contents of the books, and had inculcated in their hearts the scope and meaning of them all, he commanded that they should be buried with his body, convinced that such mysteries ought not to be entrusted to the care of lifeless documents. This is the reason, we are told [φασί], why the Pythagoreans also do not entrust their precepts to writing, but implant the memory and practice of them in living disciples worthy to receive them.

In addition to expressing a positive valorization of oral tradition over written texts, this passage also suggests that oral tradition could be based on written texts. Memory is understood as a means of ensuring that precepts and principles are put into practice, a view reflective of ancient educational theory and practice which emphasized memorization to a much greater extent than in modern times (Bonner 1977: 39-40, 167-88, 329-30).

The earliest extant evidence for the transmission of the teachings of Pythagoras exists in the form of ἀκούσματα or σύμβολα, sayings which were transmitted orally (Burkert 1972: 166-92). Iamblichus (*Vita Pythagorica* 82-86), in an arrangement which may derive from Aristotle (Burkert 1972: 170), divides ἀκούσματα into three groups which provide answers to three types of questions: (1) τί ἐστὶ; ('What is...?' i.e., *definitions*, e.g., 'What are the Isles of the Blest? Sun and moon'); (2) τί μάλιστα; ('What is the most...?' i.e., *superlatives*, e.g., 'The most just thing is to sacrifice, the wisest is number'); (3) τί πρακτέον ('What must one do?' i.e., *duties and obligations*, e.g., 'One ought to beget children, for it is our duty to leave behind people to worship the gods').

In antiquity there were two different ways of interpreting the ἀκούσματα, literally and allegorically; while Aristotle consistently uses the term ἀκούσματα, later the term σύμβολα is the more popular term (Burkert 1972: 175); the former suggests a literal inter-

pretation, the later an allegorical interpretation. The popularity of the latter term caused the former to go out of currency.

A concluding word on the diatribe is appropriate in this context, for scholars are generally agreed (1) that the diatribe is a product of Hellenistic philosophical schools, (2) that it is not a literary genre, and (3) that the term διατριβή reveals only that it is a written form of various types of *oral instruction* (Stowers 1981: 48; Schmeller 1987: 9-13). Until quite recently, the view of Wilamowitz-Moellendorff that the diatribe was a means of presenting popular morality in public lectures by itinerant philosophical preachers was dominant. The primary setting of the diatribe was therefore public preaching to groups of people aimed at converting the hearers to the philosophical way of life.

Recent research suggests that the diatribe is far more varied and complex than scholarship previously recognized. Stowers (1981) refuted the mass propaganda theory of Wilamowitz, and sought to replace it with the view that the diatribe was primarily an oral teaching style used for the educational activity of philosophical schools, and a written diatribe is a 'record of a lecture or discussion in a school and not a literary tractate' (Stowers 1981: 48). The diatribes of Epictetus, for example, are the stenographic records of Arrian of Nicomedia (one of his students) of lectures and discussions led by the Stoic philosopher (Stowers 1981: 54). Diatribes with a more pronounced literary character, such as those of Plutarch, are examples of *letteraturizzazione*, the transformation of rhetoric to literature (Stowers 1981: 65). Stowers understands the social setting of the diatribe as exclusively the classroom, and argues that the dialogical style of the diatribe reflects such a scholastic setting (1981: 76; italics omitted):

The diatribe is not the technical instruction in logic, physics, etc., but discourses and discussions in the school where the teacher employed the 'Socratic' method of censure and protreptic. The goal of this part of the instruction was not simply to impart knowledge, but to transform the students, to point out error and to cure it.

Yet while Stowers's proposal that the philosophical school was the primary social setting for the diatribe fits the writings of Musonius Rufus, Epictetus and perhaps Teles, it does not fit the activities of Maximus of Tyre, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom and Bion, who were

concerned with mass propaganda (Schmeller 1987: 41-53). Schmeller (1987: 53) argues that there are three ideal types of diatribes:

Purely oral and purely literary diatribes can be distinguished as well as an intermediate form. Among them there is certainly a continuity of development and even coexistence after a certain period.

Each of these can function in a variety of social settings. In effect, Schmeller has underscored the complexity of the oral and literary phenomena grouped under the designation 'diatribe'.

In sum, the diatribe has little relevance for the present paper, since oral communication in and of itself does not constitute oral tradition unless it meets the five criteria listed above (p. 64).

9. *The βίος of the Hero*

The Greeks fostered a continuing interest in the origins, adventures and achievements of gods, heroes and human beings, and developed the literary form biography to describe the latter (Aune 1987: 27-36). Folklorists have long recognized that the lives of gods and heroes exhibit many stereotypical features and are constituted of a limited number of motifs, many of which appear to be optional.¹ Though some scholars claim universality for the basic structural patterns they discern in the lives of heroes, that is, the morphology of the hero, it is more prudent to extend such claims only to particular cultural arenas during particular historical periods. More than a century ago von Hahn (1876: 340-41) analyzed a particular type of Aryan folk tale he designated the 'Arische Aussetzungs- und Rückkehr-Formel' ('Aryan Expulsion and Return Formula'), which consisted of sixteen elements.² More recently Raglan (1956: 174-75) proposed a pattern of twenty-two elements which he applied to twenty-one traditional heroes

1. For a review of research on this subject see Taylor 1964: 114-29.

2. (1) Hero born illegitimately, (2) mother is the princess of the country, (3) father is a god or a foreigner, (4) signs presage hero's ascendance, (5) for this he is abandoned, (6) he is nourished by animals, (7) he is raised by a shepherd, (8) he becomes a spirited youth, (9) he seeks adventure in a foreign land, (10) he returns victorious, (11) he slays his original persecutors and ascends the throne, freeing his mother, (12) he founds cities, (13) the manner of his death is unusual, (14) he is reviled because of incest and dies prematurely, (15) he dies by an act of revenge at the hands of an insulted servant, (16) he murders his younger brother.

and gods (e.g. Theseus, Romulus, Herakles, Perseus, Zeus, Jason),¹ and De Vries (1963)² proposed a more sophisticated morphology, which he thought was based on the macrocosmic significance of initiation ritual.³ Though the lives of gods and heroes are by definition the product of creative communal imagination, the lives of holy men often have a historical kernel embellished by the legendary themes characteristic of the morphology of the hero.

In comparing Jesus with a variety of Hellenistic saviors, all historical figures (e.g. Aristonicus, Eunus, Catiline, Agis and Cleomenes, the Gracchi, Cato Minor), Arnold Toynbee enumerates eighty-seven points of comparison (1939: 376-406). Discounting literary dependence, he proposes that 'the Gospels contain, embedded in them, a considerable number and variety of elements which have been

1. Raglan (1956: 174-75): (1) hero's mother a royal virgin, (2) father is a king, (3) often a near relative of his mother, (4) circumstances of his conception unusual, (5) reputed to be the son of a god, (6) at birth an attempt made on his life, but (7) he is spirited away and (8) reared by foster-parents in a distant land, (9) nothing told of childhood, (10) on maturation he returns or goes to future kingdom, and (11) after a victory over the king or another adversary, (12) he marries a princess, (13) becomes king, (14) reigns uneventfully for a time, (15) prescribes laws, but (16) eventually loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and (17) he is driven from the throne, (18) meeting with a mysterious death, (19) often at the top of a hill, (20) his children, if any, do not succeed him, (21) his body is not buried, but (22) he has one or more tombs.

2. De Vries (1963: 281-301): I. Begetting of the hero: (a) mother is a virgin, (b) father is a god, (c) father is an animal (often a deity in disguise), (d) child conceived in incest. II. Birth of the hero: (a) takes place in an unnatural manner, (b) the 'unborn' hero (Caesarean section). III. The youth of the hero is threatened: (a) child is exposed, (b) exposed child nourished by animals, (c) thereafter child reared by shepherds, (d) various heroes brought up by mythical figures. IV. Ways in which a hero is reared: (a) reveals strength, courage at early age, (b) often slow in his development, (c) hero often acquires invulnerability. V. Common deed, battle with a dragon or monster. VI. Hero wins a maiden after overcoming great dangers. VII. Hero makes an expedition to the underworld. VIII. When hero banished in his youth, later returns and is victorious over his enemies (in such cases he must leave his realm again). IX. Death of the hero.

3. De Vries (1963: 294) suggests that the hero is the counterpart of the youth in an initiation ritual, who triumphs over opposing forces at the critical moment and therefore symbolizes his people in their death and renewal. Less complex is the proposal of Campbell (1968: 30), who argues that the basic pattern of the heroic adventure consists of separation, initiation and return.

conveyed to them by the stream of "folk-memory", and 'the Gospels contain elements which are not "historical" in the conventional usage of that word' (1939: 457). Toynbee then asks whether 'folk-memory' has channeled elements from pagan authors to the Gospels or whether the Gospels and pagan authors are mutually dependent on 'folk-memory' (1939: 464). The possible common source which he proposed is the legend of Herakles, particularly the portrait of *Hercules Philosophus*. Toynbee identified twenty-four similarities between the Jesus of the Gospels and the Herakles of Greek legend (1939: 469-75). Since many of these features also characterize pagan historical heroes, Toynbee concludes (1939: 475):

This finding suggests that the legend of Herakles may be an important common source from which the story of Jesus on the one side and the stories of the pagan historical heroes on the other side may have derived some of their common features, independently of one another, through separate channels of the stream of 'folk-memory'.

Simon (1955: 63) considers Toynbee's approach challenging and expresses general agreement with 'the hypothesis of spontaneous imitation through the channel of popular tradition which he [Toynbee] has developed with such penetration, method and persuasive force'. The really difficult task in analyzing the Gospels, according to Simon, is to determine with precision where historical reality ends and fiction begins (1955: 65).

One major problem with Toynbee's approach, however, is that he nowhere recognizes that those features of the Herakles legend which have analogies in the Gospels also have many parallels in the lives of other mythical heroes.

While the earliest extant biographies of holy men were composed in the third and fourth centuries AD (e.g. Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii*; Porphyry, *Vita Pythagorae*; Iamblichus, *De Vita Pythagorica*), it is clear that the constituent legendary themes and motifs which characterize such lives originated much earlier. The Pythagoras legend, for example, goes back to the fourth century BC (specific features are listed in Burkert 1972: 141-43), and it is likely that oral tradition is involved in the transmission of the constituent elements of this legend (Burkert 1972: 146-47). It appears that the life of the hero served as a clothes line upon which could be hung almost an infinite number of episodes.

The βίαι of many ancient heroes (e.g. Herakles, Asklepios, Jason, Theseus, Perseus) have not been transmitted to us in anything like complete form except in the compilations of the later mythographers such as Apollodorus (first century AD).¹ While the life stories of the major heroes were probably well known, only anecdotes and episodes are preserved from this or that period of their lives. Particularly in Pausanias it is evident that local traditions about various episodes in the lives of heroes are preserved tenaciously though they conflict with other, more widespread traditions. The people of the city of Aliphera, for example, honor Athena, whom they claim was born and reared there (Pausanias 8.26.6). The Arcadians say that the Gigantomachy took place in Bathos, not Pellene (8.29.1). According to Arcadian tradition, Zeus was really reared at Cretea on Mt Lycaeus, not on the island of Crete (8.38.2). The Phigalians accept the account of the people of Thelpusa that Demeter mated with Poseidon, but say that Demeter bore Δέσποινα ('Mistress'), not a horse (8.42.1-2). All these stories, and many more examples could be adduced, appear to have arisen as local variants of relatively widespread hero cycles.

10. *Chreiai or Anecdotes*

Theon of Smyrna defined a chreia (χρεία) as 'a concise statement or action which is attributed with aptness to some specified character or to something analogous to a character' (trans. Hock-O'Neil 1986: 83). Chreia is a broad term which would include what New Testament scholars have called pronouncement stories, apothegms or paradigms in the Gospels (Robbins-Mack 1989: 1-29). Recently the chreia has been the subject of intensive investigation, particularly by New Testament scholars interested in shedding light on the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels. This interest, however, has focused on the rhetoric of the chreia, while the role of the chreia in oral tradition in the Greco-Roman period has been touched only tangentially.

Chreiai are often inserted into compositions as 'memorates', that is, anecdotes supposedly experienced personally by the teller (Plato, *Resp.* 329B-C; LCL trans.):²

1. Apollodorus, for example, preserves synthetic accounts of Jason (1.9.16-28), Perseus (2.1.1-4.8), Herakles (2.4.8-8.5), Theseus (3.16.1-24).

2. This chreia was cited by numerous ancient authors including Theon, *Progym.*

I remember hearing Sophocles the poet greeted by a fellow who asked, 'How about your service of Aphrodite, Sophocles—is your natural force still unabated?' And he replied, 'Hush, man, most gladly have I escaped this thing you talk of, as if I had run away from a raging and savage beast of a master'.

In Xenophon, *Hell.* 2.3.56 (LCL trans.), an apothegm or chreia of Socrates is introduced with λέγεται:

One saying [ῥῆμα] that was reported [λέγεται] was this. When Satyrus told him [Theramenes] that if he did not keep quiet, he would suffer for it, he asked, 'Then if I do keep quiet, shall I not suffer?'

According to Dio Chrysostom, everyone could recite chreiai about Diogenes the Cynic (*Or.* 72.11). Chreiai were transmitted as both oral tradition and written texts. Diogenes Laertius gives the following report of the philosopher Arcesilaus (4.40; LCL trans.):

He lived openly with Theodete and Phila, the Elean courtesans, and to those who censured him he quoted the maxims of Aristippus [τὰς 'Αριστίππου χρείας].

Hock and O'Neil (1986: 7) plausibly suggest that one of these was probably that preserved in Theodoret, *Graec. aff. cur.* 12:

Aristippus the Cyrenaic, on being reproached because he was often in the company of the Corinthian courtesan Lais, said, 'I keep her, not she me'.

Plutarch mentions his interest in collecting [συνάγειν] and reading [ἀναγινώσκειν] the sayings of philosophers, kings and tyrants (*De cohibenda ira* 457D-E), and elsewhere speaks of 'some who gather chreiai and stories [χρείας καὶ ἱστορίας ἀναλεγόμενοι]' (*De prof. in virt.* 78F). Though the sources of these chreiai are not mentioned, they could obviously be gleaned from written as well as oral sources. During the first century AD it is likely that they were gathered primarily from literary sources (Hock–O'Neil 1986: 8). Hock and O'Neil point out that Menander Rhetor (2.392.28-31) recommends that rhetoricians consult Plutarch's *Lives*.¹

2.66 (Spengel); Ammianus Marcellinus 25.4.2; Cicero, *Cato M.* 14; Plutarch, *De cupid. divit.* 5; *An seni* 788; Athenaeus 12.510; Philostratus, *Vita Apoll.* 1.13.

1. This is my translation of the text by Russell and Wilson 1981: 122; their translation on p. 123 is problematic since χρεῖων is left untranslated.

They are filled with stories and apothegms and proverbs and chreiai [ἱστοριῶν καὶ ἀποφθεγμάτων καὶ παροιμιῶν καὶ χρεϊῶν], for it is useful to include all these in talks [λαλίσαις].

In Seneca (*Ep.* 33.7; LCL trans.) we learn that children were given chreiai to memorize and that even some adults collected and memorized chreiai, a practice of which he strongly disapproved:

That is why we give to children a proverb [*sententias*], or that which the Greeks call *Chria*, to be learned by heart; that sort of thing can be comprehended by the young mind, which cannot as yet hold more. For a man, however, whose progress is definite, to chase after choice extracts and to prop his weakness by the best known and the briefest sayings and to depend upon his memory, is disgraceful; it is time for him to lean on himself. He should make such maxims and not memorize them.

The fact that Seneca condemns this practice suggests that it was not uncommon, and further suggests that the memorization of chreiae was not limited to children.

11. *Stories*

There are a number of terms for 'story', including ἱστορία, λόγος and μῦθος, which can be used interchangeably (Lucian, *De dea Syr.* 12), though the second came to mean 'true stories', while the last was used of 'fictional stories' (*TDNT*, IV: 74-75, 767-69). However, the notion that either λόγος or μῦθος can be used to designate particular narrative *genres* (Betz 1983: 585-95) is problematic. Stories, that is, prose narratives in which the action and characters are organized in a plot which provides final resolution for dramatic tension, exhibit great variety and are difficult to describe generically. They were popular throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, as they are everywhere. Stories were told in a great variety of social settings, including the kind described by Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 20.9-10 (LCL trans.):

The elementary teachers sit in the streets with their pupils, and nothing hinders them in this great throng from teaching and learning. And I remember once seeing, while walking through the Hippodrome, many people on one spot and each one doing something different; one playing the flute, another dancing, another doing a juggler's trick, another reading a poem aloud, another singing, and another telling some story or myth [τὸν δὲ ἱστορίαν τινὰ μῦθον διηγούμενον].

In Juvenal, *Satires* 15.16, Odysseus is called a *mendax aretalogus*, a 'lying storyteller'. The scholion on this passage defines *aretalogi* as 'those who talk of marvelous things, that is, the miracles of the gods. In my opinion mention is being made of those *aretalogi* who tell common people those things which should not be uttered' (Wessner 1967: 227).¹ The term ἀρεταί means 'miracles', and an ἀρεταλόγος is then a person who tells tall stories or praises the gods (Smith 1971: 175); more broadly conceived, a professional storyteller who could function in either a religious or a secular setting. Though little in fact is known of *aretalogi*, there is evidence to suggest that some were adjuncts to various religious cults, particularly the Egyptian cults of Isis, Osiris and Serapis (Merkelbach 1962: 88-89; Longo 1969: 18), and plied their trade in the vicinity of sanctuaries. According to Winkler (1985: 237),

What we are describing, rather, is an activity and an ability—the possession of a repertory of stories about a sacred vicinity—rather than a formal religious office or a genre with fixed rules of style and content. The most likely examples of what an *aretalogos* could have narrated are the stories of cures at the healing shrines of Serapis and Asklepios, of which a fair number have survived. They test the boundaries of credulity, relating quite fantastic events, often rather amusing ones and sometimes involving the conversion of disbelievers.

Others were itinerant storytellers with no particular concern or connection with religious or cultic interests, such as the *aretalogoi* invited by Augustus to entertain his dinner guests (Suetonius, *Oct.* 74; LCL trans.):

He [Augustus] served a dinner of three courses or of six when he was most lavish, without needless extravagance but with the greatest good fellowship. For he drew into the general conversation those who were silent or chatted under their breath, and introduced music and actors, or even strolling players from the circus, and especially story-tellers [*aretalogos*].

These *aretalogoi* may be identical with the *fabulatores* whom Augustus summoned during periods of insomnia (Suetonius, *Oct.* 78.2). Scobie (1969: 9-29) has proposed that the popularity of the Hellenistic novel

1. 'Aretalogi sunt, ut quidam volunt, qui miras res, id est deorum virtutes, loquuntur. mihi autem videtur aretalogos illos dici qui ea quae dicta non sunt in vulgus proferunt.'

was due to the activity of itinerant professional story tellers. However, the structure of the novel is very different from the wonder stories told by *aretalogoi*, though the narrative technique of novels suggests that they were written for recitation (Hägg 1983: 93).

12. *Conclusions*

1. Oral tradition is a type of folklore which was widespread in the Hellenistic and Roman periods despite the fact that literacy was not uncommon. Although methodological problems impede the satisfactory analysis of the form, content and function of such traditions, nonetheless much can be known about them. The preceding survey, however, has touched on many areas which modern scholarship has yet to investigate in any detail and the absence of such penetrating studies means that the present effort can only pretend to constitute a surface exploration of the phenomenon.

2. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods oral traditions occupy quite a different and more varied role than they did in the centuries before the invention of the Greek alphabet. First, oral tradition was regarded by some as a way of ensuring that esoteric traditions remained unknown outside the immediate social circle within which they were transmitted (Plutarch, *Numa* 22.3). Secondly, in some circles oral texts were considered more valuable than written texts. Thirdly, in other circles written texts were considered more valuable than oral tradition. Fourthly, oral texts are particularly important in that they often reflect the reduction of the basic values of the culture to memorable forms which can perpetuate basic social and cultural values.

3. The writings of such Hellenistic authors as Plutarch, Lucian and Pausanias suggest that various genres of oral tradition were in circulation and could be collected by anyone interested enough to do so. This interest appears to have been encouraged by the conception which is found in Herodotus, and which reappears even in a Christian scholar such as Papias, that the evidence of the eyes and the ears was of primary importance for historians and other writers concerned with mimetic descriptions of events which occurred in the real world.

4. Again, the evidence from Herodotus, Plutarch, Lucian and Pausanias suggests that various genres of oral tradition were preserved in specific localities where it was believed that events of

mythical times had taken place. The fact that such places were marked with sanctuaries and other material memorials encouraged the growth and transmission of explanations in various oral genres, and it was the perceived connection between location and story which encouraged preservation, transmission and dissemination.

5. The modern conception of the verbatim transmission of memorized traditions does not appear to apply to the vast majority of oral traditions in the Greco-Roman world, although there is no scientific way to confirm or deny such a proposal apart from analogies with modern folklore forms. Further the *veracity* of such traditions is a problem for which there is no easy or obvious solution. In the case of the oral traditions preserved by Papias, mythical and legendary elements appear to predominate.

6. While Hellenistic authors do not frequently identify the sources of oral information, the evidence suggests that there were a variety of specialists who were storehouses of archaic lore. Some of these specialists included the tour guides who were to be found in places where there was a tourist trade. Further, the personnel at sanctuaries appear to have been resources for visitors interested in the origin and significance of the sanctuary, various works of religious art, topographical features of religious or mythical significance, unusual epithets of the gods and goddesses, and unique rituals. Again, Pausanias refers several times to a vague group defined simply as 'those who remember ancient things', people who were probably not identical with local tour guides.

7. It is of some interest that very little can be learned about oral traditions in rhetoric, philosophy and religious cults. The data concerning Orphism and Pythagoreanism are tantalizingly meager, and there is simply not enough information about the mystery cults for us to speculate about the form, content and function of oral tradition in that setting.

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ORAL TRADITION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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It is a difficult task to speak of 'Oral Tradition in the Old Testament'. The expression 'oral tradition', whether in English, German or other modern European languages, has no equivalent in biblical Hebrew, the language in which the body of texts known as the Old Testament has come down to us. It is true that Ezek. 20.37 contains the expression במסרה הבריה. In mishnaic Hebrew, for example, the saying of Rabbi Aqiba (died 135) מסרה סנה לחרה (*m. Ab.* 3.13), 'Tradition is a fence round the Torah', מסרה has the meaning 'tradition'. In his Commentary on Ezekiel, Rashi (1040–1105) interprets the expression by בבריה 'through the covenant which I have handed down to you'. But David Qimhi (died 1235) already writes, 'There is no aleph. The verb is pe/aleph. The regular form would be במאסרה, which is a noun analogous to שק מתורה "girdling with sackcloth"' (Isa. 3.24). His explanation is, 'I will bind you through the covenant so that you cannot desert it for all eternity'. This interpretation has held sway in its essentials up to the present day.¹ On the other hand the substantival adverbial expressions שבכתב and שבעלפה, which serve as circumlocutions for 'written' and 'oral', are exclusively creations of mishnaic Hebrew. Their meaning is easy to deduce from the Commentary on Abot by Mahzor Vitry (before 1105).² On *m. Ab.* 1.1 'Moses received the Torah from Sinai and handed it on to Joshua' he writes, כל החרה כלה שבכתב, ושבעלפה, 'Absolutely the whole Torah, both written and oral'.

1. Cf. V. Gesenius and F. Buhl, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, new edn, 1954), p. 442a, and L. Koehler and V. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: Brill 1953), p. 544a.

2. (1963 edn), p. 461.

1. The Historical Books

The fact that biblical Hebrew contains nothing corresponding to the concept 'oral tradition' does not of course imply that the reality to which this concept corresponds cannot have existed. On the contrary, the process of 'oral tradition' seems to be described in at least two areas of Old Testament literature. I am thinking especially of texts such as (quoting from the New Jerusalem Bible):

So that you can recount (ספר) to your sons and grandsons how I made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I performed among them, so that you would know that I am the LORD (Exod. 10.2).

And when your children ask you, 'What does this ritual mean?' you will tell (אמר) them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice in honour of the LORD who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, and struck Egypt but spared our houses' (Exod. 12.26-27).

And when your son asks you in days to come, 'What does this mean?' you will tell (אמר) him, 'By the strength of his hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the place of slave-labour' (Exod. 13.14).

Teach (דע) your children and your children's children. The day you stood at Horeb in the presence of the LORD your God, the LORD said to me, 'Summon the people to me; I want them to hear me speaking, so that they will learn (למד) to fear me all the days they live on earth, and teach this to their children' (Deut. 4.9-10).

In times to come, when your child asks you, 'What is the meaning of these instructions, laws and customs which the LORD our God has laid down for you?' you are to tell (אמר) your child, 'Once we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt by his mighty hand. Before our eyes, the LORD worked great and terrible signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and his entire household. And he brought us out of there, to lead us into the country which he had sworn to our ancestors that he would give us' (Deut. 6.20-23).

Question your father, let him explain (נר) to you, your elders, and let them tell (אמר) you! (Deut. 32.7).

When, in the future, your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean for you?' you will then tell (אמר) them, 'The waters of the Jordan separated before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. These stones are an everlasting reminder of this to the Israelites' (Josh. 4.6-7).

When, in the future, your children ask their fathers, 'What are these stones?' you will teach (יָדַע) your children, 'Israel crossed this Jordan dry-shod. For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan in front of you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God did to the Sea of Reeds, which he dried up before us until we had crossed it; so that all the peoples of the earth may know how mighty the hand of the LORD is, and always stand in awe of the LORD your God' (Josh. 4.21-24).

And where are all his miracles which our ancestors used to recount (סָפַר) to us when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us out of Egypt?' (Judg. 6.13).

God, we have heard (שָׁמַע) for ourselves, our ancestors have recounted (סָפַר) to us, the deeds you did in their days, in the days of old, by your hand. To establish them in the land you drove out nations. . . (Ps. 44.2-3).

What we have heard (שָׁמַע) and know what our ancestors have told (סָפַר) us we shall not conceal from their descendants, but will tell (סָפַר) to a generation still to come (Ps. 78.3-4).

He instituted a witness in Jacob, he established a law in Israel, he commanded our ancestors to teach it (יָדַע) to their descendants, that a generation still to come might know it, children yet to be born. They should be sure to recount (סָפַר) to their own children, and should put their trust in God, never forgetting God's great deeds. . . (Ps. 78.5-7).

All these texts are concerned with the duty laid on fathers of telling their children (and children's children) of the great deeds of God. The occasion of this telling can be a question to a father from his son about some specific custom (normally a sacral one). The process of telling is indicated by the verbs סָפַר, 'recount' (Exod. 10.2; Judg. 6.13; Ps. 44.2-3; 78.3-4 twice, 5-7), אָמַר, 'tell' (Exod. 12.26-27; 13.14; Deut. 6.20-23; 32.7; Josh. 4.6-7), יָדַע, 'teach' (Deut. 4.9-10; Josh. 4.21-24; Ps. 78.57) and נָגַד, 'explain' (Deut. 32.7). The reception of the information is indicated by שָׁמַע, 'hear' (Ps. 44.2-3; 78.34). Of these verbs נָגַד is of special interest, for the noun *haggada* in mishnaic Hebrew is derived from it, and a number of the verses quoted here constitute an important part of the *Haggada shel-Pesach*. Finally the content of the information imparted by fathers to their children is the basic great deeds of God for his people, beginning with the plagues (Exod. 10.2; Deut. 6.20-23), continuing with the people being led up and out of Egypt (Exod. 13.14; Deut. 6.20-23; Judg. 6.13), the rescue from the Sea of Reeds (Josh. 4.21-24), the revelation on Sinai (Deut. 4.9-10), right up to the crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 4.6-7, 21-24), the entry

into the promised land (Deut. 6.20-23) and its conquest (Ps. 44.23). Apart from the revelation on Sinai, mentioned in Deut. 4.9-10, this makes up the content of Gerhard von Rad's so-called 'short historical Credo'.¹

Von Rad thought that in the 'short historical Credo' he had found the kernel of the whole Hexateuch, but Leonhard Rost² and especially Wolfgang Richter³ have succeeded in showing that Deut. 26.5-9 and related passages are deuteronomistic summaries which presuppose at least the Yahwist, if not the editorial joining of Yahwist and Elohist. The passages here given are also deuteronomistic in origin. Exod. 10.2, 12.26-27 and 13.14 are 'proto-deuteronomistic', while Deut. 4.4-5, 6.20-23 and 32.7 on the one side and Josh. 4.6-7, 21-24 and Judg. 6.13 on the other originate in the framework of Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic history respectively. Of the two Psalms, at least Psalm 78 should be ascribed to the 'deuteronomistic school'.⁴ This makes it fairly probable that, just as in the case of the 'short historical Credo', we can speak of 'oral tradition' here only in the sense that written tradition becomes oral tradition for purposes of instruction. This occurs primarily with those elements of oral tradition which express central elements of a faith—and this is a phenomenon with which we are all familiar, either actively or passively, from religious instruction. Commonly known non-biblical examples of such presentation of oral as written tradition are books like the *Haggada shel-Pesach* or Martin Luther's 'Short Catechism'. In these, despite the written form, the forms of oral communication are constantly visible.

2. *The Book of Proverbs*

The second area of Old Testament literature in which the process of oral tradition is described is in Proverbs 1-9, entitled 'Instruction in

1. G. von Rad, *Das formgeschichtliche Problem des Hexateuch* (BWANT, 4/26; Leipzig: Kohlhammer, 1938 = *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, Theologische Bücherei 8, 1958), pp. 9-86, especially 11-20.

2. L. Rost, *Das kleine Credo* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1965), pp. 11-25.

3. W. Richter, 'Beobachtungen zur theologischen Systembildung in der alttestamentlichen Literatur an Hand des "kleinen geschichtlichen Credo"', in *Festschrift M. Schmaus* (1967), I, pp. 175-212.

4. G. Fohrer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 10th edn, 1965), p. 314.

Wisdom' by Bernhard Lang,¹ following Otto Eissfeldt.² In detail the following texts are meant:

Listen (שמע), my child, to your father's instruction, do not reject (שמו) your mother's teaching: they will be a crown of grace for your head, a circlet for your neck (Prov. 1.8-9).

My child, if you take my words to heart (לקח), if you treasure (צפן) my commandments, tuning your ear to wisdom, tuning your heart to understanding, yes, if your plea is for clear perception, if you cry out for understanding, if you look for it as though for silver, search for it as though for buried treasure, then you will understand what the fear of the LORD is, and discover the knowledge of God (Prov. 2.1-5).

My child, do not forget (שכח) my teaching, let your heart keep (נצר) my commandments, since they will increase your length of days, your years of life and your well-being. Let faithful love and constancy never leave you; tie them round your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Thus you will find favour and success in the sight of God and of people (Prov. 3.1-4).

My child, hold to (לז) sound advice and prudence, keep (נצר) them in your sight; they will give life to your soul and beauty to your neck. . . (Prov. 3.21-26).

Listen (שמע), my children, to a father's instruction; pay attention (קשב), and learn what understanding is. What I am offering you (תן) is sound doctrine; do not forsake my teaching (Prov. 4.1-2).

Listen (שמע), my child, take my words to heart (לקח), and the years of your life will be multiplied. I have educated you in the ways of wisdom, I have guided you along the path of honesty. When you walk, your going will be unhindered, if you run you will not stumble. Hold fast to discipline, never let her go, keep your eyes on her, she is your life (Prov. 4.10-13).

My child, pay attention (קשב) to what I am telling you, bend your ear (ה) to my words; do not let them out of your sight, keep them deep in your heart. For they are life to those who find them and health to all humanity (Prov. 4.20-22).

My son, pay attention (קשב) to my wisdom, bend your ear (ה) to what I know; so that you may preserve discretion and your lips may guard knowledge (Prov. 5.1-2).

1. B. Lang, *Die weisheitliche Lehrrede* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien, 54; Stuttgart: Katholische Bibelwerk, 1972).

2. O. Eissfeldt, *Der Maschal im Alten Testament* (BZAW, 24; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1913), pp. 36-37.

Keep (נצר) your father's commandment, my child, do not spurn (גמול) your mother's teaching. Bind them ever to your heart, tie them round your neck (Prov. 6.20-24).

My child, keep (שמר) my words, and treasure (צפן) my commandments, observe my commandments and you will live, keep my teaching as the apple of your eye. Bind these to your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart (Prov. 7.1-3).

In contrast to the previous texts taken from the historical books and the Psalms, the father-son relationship mentioned in Proverbs 1-9 is not the relationship of a *paterfamilias* to his children (and children's children), but that of a teacher to his pupils. In the Wisdom literature of the whole of the ancient Near East, Egypt and Mesopotamia no less than Israel, the words 'father' and 'son' are technical terms for 'teacher' and 'pupil'. The teacher's office is to give his instruction, which is denoted generally as אמרים, 'words' (Prov. 4.10-13, 20-22; 7.1-4), דברים, 'words' (Prov. 4.20-22), or more particularly as מוסר, 'instruction' (Prov. 1.8-9; 4.1-2), חרה, 'teaching' (Prov. 1.8-9; 3.1-4; 6.20-24; 7.1-4), מצוה, 'commandment' (Prov. 2.1-11; 3.1-4; 4.1-2; 6.20-24; 7.1-4 twice), לקח טוב, 'sound doctrine' (Prov. 4.1-2), חכמה, 'wisdom' (Prov. 5.1-2) or חבוכה, 'what I know' (Prov. 5.1-2). The pupil for his part is expected to make these teachings his own. While the pupil's activity is denoted by a variety of expressions the activity of a teacher appears in Prov. 4.2a as 'offering sound teaching' כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם.

Besides שמע, 'listen' (Prov. 1.8-9; 4.1-2, 10-13), קשב, 'pay attention' (Prov. 4.1, 20-22; 5.1-2), and אזן with the object און, 'bend your ear' (Prov. 4.20-22; 5.1-2), there appear also לקח, 'take to heart' (Prov. 2.1-11; 4.10-13), נצר, 'keep' (Prov. 3.1-4, 21-26; 6.20-24), צפן, 'treasure' (Prov. 2.1-11; 7.1-4), and שמר, 'observe' (Prov. 7.1-4). Among these expressions the pair of concepts לקח/נתן deserve special attention: it might almost be a foretaste of that pair of concepts מסר/קבל, 'receive/hand on', so well known from *m. Ab.* 1.1, and used in mishnaic Hebrew to describe the process of oral tradition. The content of the oral tradition which we find in 'Instructions on Wisdom' in Proverbs 1-9 is characterized by Bernhard Lang as 'the combination of action and experience',¹ 'piety and teaching about

1. Lang, *Lehrrede*, pp. 61-73.

religion',¹ or 'teaching about the "strange woman"'.² Consequently these 'Instructions on Wisdom' should be seen as 'an artificial unit of instruction, to be written down and memorized'.³ Whether the teacher had previously fixed this 'unit of instruction' in writing or not is immaterial. By analogy with the process in the schools of Egypt and Mesopotamia, Lang assumes that the writing down of these 'Instructions on Wisdom' will have been done by dictation. So in the view of the pupil the oral character of this tradition will have been limited to a few hours or even minutes. It must further be noted that memorization which follows the 'Instructions on Wisdom' is characterized as 'writing them on the tablet of your heart' (Prov. 3.3; 7.3). This shows that in the 'not very early post-exilic period' when chs. 1–9 of Proverbs are assumed to have been written,⁴ in a school context (in which learning to read and write doubtless played a central part), the committing of the oral tradition to memory could be conceived only as a special form of writing.

3. *Prophetic Literature*

After these texts from the historical books and the Psalms, and from the book of Proverbs, I should like to consider some passages from the prophetic literature. I begin with Jeremiah 26, where we read in vv. 1-6:

At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, this word of the LORD came. The LORD says this, 'Stand in the court of the Temple of the LORD. To all the people from the towns of Judah who come to worship in the Temple of the LORD you will say everything I have ordered you to say, not omitting one syllable. Perhaps they will listen and each turn from his evil way: if so, I shall relent and not bring the disaster on them which I intend because of their misdeeds.' Say to them, 'The LORD says this: If you will not listen to me and follow my Law which I have given you, and pay attention to the words of my servants the prophets whom I have never tired of sending to you, although you never have paid attention, I shall treat this Temple as I treated Shiloh, and make this city a curse for all the nations of the world.'

1. Lang, *Lehrrede*, pp. 73-87.

2. Lang, *Lehrrede*, pp. 87-99.

3. Lang, *Lehrrede*, p. 39.

4. Cf. R. Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (Theologische Wissenschaft, 1; Cologne: Kohlhammer, 1978), p. 211.

The threat of vv. 4-6, introduced by the proclamation formula 'the LORD says this', has a parallel in Jer. 7.12-15. There we read:

'Now go to the place which used to be mine at Shiloh, where I once gave my name a home; see what I have done to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel! And now, since you have done all these things', the LORD declares, 'and refused to listen when I spoke so urgently, so persistently, or to answer when I called you, I shall treat the Temple that bears my name, and in which you put your heart, the place that I gave you and your ancestors, just as I treated Shiloh, and I shall drive you out of my sight, as I did all your kinsfolk, the whole race of Ephraim'.

Assuming the historicity of Jeremiah's proclamation about the Temple, we can hardly doubt that Jer. 7.12-15 and 26.4-6 contain two different versions of one single prophetic pronouncement. Sigmund Mowinckel¹ posited a Collection C of 'Sayings closely related to deuteronomic language and theology' and another Collection B with 'Stories about Jeremiah', which would be the sources respectively of these two versions. The differences between them are so great that the original prophetic proclamation can hardly be reconstructed with any certainty.² On these pre-suppositions the only solution, then, is that the oral tradition of Jeremiah's proclamation about the Temple, which the editors of Collections C and B had before them, was so fluid that the form of the individual traditions which had come down to them left a good deal of room for manoeuvre.

The sequel to Jeremiah's proclamation about the Temple runs:

The priests and prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah say these words in the Temple of the LORD. When Jeremiah had finished saying everything that the LORD had ordered him to say to all the people, the priests and prophets and all the people seized hold of him and said, 'You will die for this! Why have you made this prophecy in the LORD's name, "This Temple will become like Shiloh, and this city become an uninhabited ruin"?' And the people all crowded in on Jeremiah in the Temple of the LORD. Hearing of this, the chief men of Judah came up from the royal palace to the Temple of the LORD and took their seats at the entry of the New Gate of the Temple of the LORD. The priests and prophets then said to the chief men and all the people, 'This man deserves to die, since he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with

1. S. Mowinckel, *Zur Komposition des Buches Jeremia* (SVSK.HF; Oslo: Videnskaps-Akademi, 1913-14).

2. See the attempt, based on Jeremiah 7, made by G. Fohrer, 'Jeremias Tempelwort 7, 7-15', *TZ* 5 (1949), pp. 401-17.

your own ears'. Jeremiah, however, replied to all the chief men and all the people as follows, 'The LORD himself sent me to prophesy against the Temple and this city all the things you have heard. So now amend your behaviour and actions, listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and the LORD will relent about the disaster that he has decreed for you. For myself, I am, as you see, in your hands. Do whatever you please or think right with me. But be sure of this, that if you put me to death, you will be bringing innocent blood on yourselves, on this city and on its inhabitants, since the LORD has truly sent me to you to say all this for you to hear.' The chief men and all the people then said to the priests and prophets, 'This man does not deserve to die: he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God'. And some of the country's elders rose to address all the assembled people, 'Micah of Moresheth', they said, 'who prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, had this to say to all the people of Judah, "The LORD Sabaoth says this:

Zion will become ploughland,
Jerusalem a heap of rubble
and the Temple Mount a wooded height."

Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death for this? Did they not rather, fearing the LORD, plead with him, to such effect that the LORD relented about the disaster which he had decreed for them? Are we now to burden our souls with such a crime?"

The saying of the prophet Micah adduced by the country's elders corresponds verbatim—apart from an unimportant variation in spelling (עִי instead of עִים 'heap of rubble')—to Mic. 3.12. Klaus Koch deduces that the elders further know of 'accompanying circumstances of which we receive no report':¹ 'Here we encounter genuine living oral tradition'. Koch's deduction can hardly be disproved, but nor can the possibility that the editor of Collection B (often since Bernhard Duhm² equated with Baruch son of Neriah) already had before him the book of Micah in written form. On the other hand the quotation from Mic. 1.2 given in the Masoretic text, but not in the original Septuagint text of 1 Kgs 22.28, is a literary gloss, attempting to identify Micah the son of Imlah with the author of the prophetic book, Micah of Moresheth.

A further text of Jeremiah important for the question of oral tradition in the Old Testament is Jeremiah 36. This informs us,

1. K. Koch, *Was ist Formgeschichte?* (Neue Wege der Bibelexegese; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2nd edn, 1967), p. 104 n. 21.

2. B. Duhm, *KHC*, 1901.

In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, 'Take a scroll and on it write all the words I have spoken to you about Israel, Judah and all the nations, from the day I first spoke to you, in the time of Josiah, until today. Perhaps when the House of Judah hears about all the disasters I intend to inflict on them, they will turn, each one of them from their evil behaviour, so that I can forgive their sinful guilt.' Jeremiah then summoned Baruch son of Neriah, who at his dictation wrote down on the scroll all the words the LORD had spoken to him. Jeremiah then gave Baruch this order, 'As I am prevented from entering the Temple of the LORD, you yourself must go and, from the scroll you wrote at my dictation, read all the LORD's words to the people in his Temple on the day of the fast, and in this way you can read them in the hearing also of all the Judaeans who come in from their towns. Perhaps their prayers will move the LORD and they will turn one and all from their evil behaviour, for great is the furious anger with which the LORD has threatened this people.' Baruch son of Neriah duly carried out the order that the prophet Jeremiah had given him, to read all the LORD's words from the book in his Temple.

On a fast day in the ninth month of the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah the so-called 'original scroll' was in fact read three times, twice by Baruch the son of Neriah himself. The first time was 'in the room of Gemariah son of the scribe Shaphan' in the presence of 'all the people of Jerusalem and all the people who could get to Jerusalem from the towns of Judah'. The second time was 'in the royal palace, in the scribe's room' in the presence of 'all the chief men'. After that the scroll was confiscated and its contents were communicated to the king. And the king charged a certain Jehudi to fetch the scroll and read it to him.

The account continues,

The king was sitting in his winter apartments—it was the ninth month—with a brazier. Each time Jehudi had read three or four columns, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the fire in the brazier until the whole of the scroll had been burnt in the brazier fire.

The account concludes,

Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after the king had burnt the scroll containing the words Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, 'Take another scroll and write down all the words that were written on the first scroll burnt by Jehoiakim king of Judah. And as regards Jehoiakim king of Judah, you are to say, "The LORD says this: You have burnt that scroll, saying: Why have you written down, The king of Babylon will

certainly come and lay this country waste and leave it without human or animal? So, this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to occupy the throne of David, and his corpse will be tossed out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. I shall punish him, his offspring and his courtiers for their guilt; on them, on the citizens of Jerusalem and on the people of Judah I shall bring the total disaster which I had decreed for them but to which they have paid no attention.”

Jeremiah then took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, who in it at Jeremiah's dictation wrote all the words of the book that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burnt, with many similar words in addition.

Assuming the historicity of Jeremiah 36, we experience how the original form of the book of Jeremiah came into being, and indeed not only its first but also its second, enlarged edition. This has no parallel anywhere in the Old Testament. In each case Baruch writes down ‘all the words the LORD had spoken to Jeremiah’ (v. 4) and ‘all the words of the (first) book’ (v. 32) *בפי ירמיהו*, ‘from the mouth of Jeremiah’, that is, at the prophet's dictation. This is the moment of the transition from oral to written tradition. The question is only whether the words of Jeremiah had until then been handed on only orally and were first written down ‘in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah’, or whether the prophet based his writing-down on earlier notes, at least for parts of the scroll. In the latter case the situation of Jeremiah 36 is not basically different from that which we concluded about the ‘Instructions on Wisdom’ of Proverbs 1–9. It would again be a matter of the orality of the tradition, or at least a part of it, existing only for hours or even minutes.

No firm decision between these two possibilities can be made. Evidence in favour of a hitherto oral tradition of Jeremiah's words being first written down now, is that before ‘the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah’ there is no mention in the book of Jeremiah of any notes either of Jeremiah or of Baruch. Evidence in favour of a basis in pre-existent notes is that, according to Jer. 51.60–64, in the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, the prophet wrote in a book ‘the entire disaster that was to befall Babylon’. He gives this book to Seraiah, son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, who is going in the king's retinue to Babylon, and orders him,

When you reach Babylon, see to it that you read all these words aloud.
Then say, ‘You, LORD, have promised to destroy this place, so that no

one will live here ever again, neither human nor animal, and it will be desolate for ever'. Then, when you have finished reading this book, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, with the words, 'So shall Babylon sink, never to rise again from the disaster which I am going to bring on her'.

Just as 'all these words written (כתובים) here against Babylon' (Jer. 51.60) are written in a special book, so in principle could individual sayings or groups of sayings (linked thematically?) have been written earlier.

Furthermore, a comparison of Jeremiah 36 to Jer. 51.60-64 shows with all possible clarity that the author or authors of the two passages are interested not in the writing-down of oral tradition as such, but only in its writing down at this particular point in time. 'In the fourth year of Joiakim son of Josiah king of Judah', that is in the year 605 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar, still heir to the throne, won a decisive victory over the Egyptians at Carchemish. After this anyone with foresight, and Jeremiah certainly had that, could reckon that the neo-Babylonians would not miss an opportunity to put an end to the national autonomy of Judah. And in the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah (that is, 594 BCE) a coalition of Judah with Moab, Edom, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon came into being against Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (cf. Jer. 27.3). At this point Jeremiah was expecting the more or less immediate collapse of Babel. In both situations parts of Jeremiah's preaching were written down, first his sayings against his own people and later his sayings against Babel. The principal purpose of this would have been to prove to outsiders the truth and correctness of the prophetic message. (We need not here consider the fact that according to Jer. 36.4 the Judean people were supposed to be called to repentance by a reading of the 'original scroll', and that according to Jer. 51.63-64 the book with the sayings against Babel is to be used for a kind of sympathetic magic.) In other words, neither in Jeremiah 36 nor in Jeremiah 51 is there any question of the transition from oral to written tradition. Rather it is a question of the *publication* of the relevant prophetic sayings and groups of sayings found to be necessary in the particular historical circumstances.

It would remain to demonstrate in detail that the same is unfortunately the case with texts of Isaiah and Habakkuk such as Isa. 8.1-2, 16-17 and 30.8-9 or Hab. 2.2-3. These are repeatedly used to prove

that the originally oral tradition of the sayings of the prophets was gradually transformed into written tradition. Two facts are equally beyond any shadow of doubt, that the sayings of the prophets were handed down orally, and that there is no satisfactory clue in the Old Testament as to when the oral changes into written tradition.

There is basically nothing surprising about this overridingly negative conclusion. Whether we think of Babylonio-Assyrian cuneiform, Egyptian hieroglyphics, the alphabetical cuneiform of Ugarit or the Phoenician and Aramaic alphabetical scripts, Palestine from the very beginning was linked to the written culture developed in these neighbouring lands. Israel will have made use of its achievements soon after they took possession of the country. A text like Judg. 8.14, which shows a young man, certainly not a professional scribe, writing down for Gideon the names of the elders of Sukkoth, at least shows how early the art of writing was widespread in Israel. These observations enable me to take up the same position with regard to oral (and written) tradition in the Old Testament as Rudolf Smend in *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments*. I would like to bring my remarks to a conclusion with a quotation from this work:¹

Both oral and written tradition existed. We know the former only through the latter, and can form only an unclear picture of it. The boundaries between the two were fluid and must not be made too formal. Oral tradition comes first. But this does not mean either that written tradition was not extremely early or that written tradition gradually won the undisputed victory.

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ORAL TRADITION AND WRITTEN TRANSMISSION,
OR THE HEARD AND THE SEEN WORD
IN JUDAISM OF THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD

Shemaryahu Talmon

1. *The Importance of Evidence from Qumran*

The problem of 'oral' and 'written' has for a long time exercised the minds of scholars who purport to trace the transmission history of rabbinic law and lore, which by the designation Oral Torah is set apart from the biblical writings that *in toto* come under the heading Written Torah. To illustrate the degree to which this field has been ploughed over, it suffices to mention, among others, some of the more recent incisive studies by E.E. Urbach¹ and other Israeli scholars, and on the American continent by S. Lieberman² and J. Neusner.³ As the title of Urbach's magnum opus, *The Sages—their Concepts and Beliefs*, makes manifest, these students of oral tradition address themselves exclusively to the rabbinic world of thought.⁴ They will touch only *en passant* on the possible application of their findings to the conceptual universe of other schools in Judaism of the Second Temple period.

1. E.E. Urbach, *The Sages—their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. J. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), esp. chapter XII, 'The Written Law and the Oral Law', pp. 207-314.

2. S. Lieberman, *Greek in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1942); *idem*, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950).

3. J. Neusner, 'The Meaning of Oral Torah', in *Early Rabbinic Judaism: Historical Studies in Religion, Literature and Art* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 1-33; *idem*, 'Accommodating Mishnah to Scripture in Judaism: the Uneasy Union and its Offspring', *Michigan Quarterly Review* 22 (1983), pp. 465-79; *idem*, *Oral Tradition in Judaism: The Case of the Mishnah* (New York: Garland, 1987).

4. See also G. Stemberger, *Kultur und Geschichte der rabbinischen Zeit (70 n. Chr.-1040 n. Chr.)* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1979).

Since the question of oral tradition and written transmission has been dealt with so extensively and intensively, it is doubtful whether any new light can still be shed on their several functions in mainstream and other schools in the Second Temple period as long as the issue is probed exclusively in the framework of the conceptual universe of rabbinic Judaism and its literature. A reopening of the discussion seems to make sense only if wider ramifications of the phenomena involved are taken into account. Such cross-cultural research has predominantly been undertaken by scholars who have explored the transferability of phenomena identified in the rabbinic tradition to the world of nascent Christianity, especially to the study of the transmission history of the Gospels.¹ The present group of studies serves as a clearing house for the endeavour, so to speak.²

It will be generally agreed that this significant enterprise received an important stimulus from the pioneering work of Birger Gerhardsson. His *Memory and Manuscript*³ has triggered a series of studies in which the question of oral tradition and written transmission in rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity is brought under synoptic scrutiny.⁴

Gerhardsson's central theses encountered criticism from diverse quarters, mainly on two counts:⁵

1. Proponents of the primacy of orality, foremost NT scholars, reject his portrayal of Jesus as a rabbinic-type teacher of the Torah who linked his words and deeds closely with the Torah, and required his disciples to memorize his sayings.

1. I would make special mention in this context of the work of D. Daube, W.D. Davies and Morton Smith.

2. The pertinent titles are adduced in D.L. Dungan's 'Historical Note', in *The Interrelations of the Gospels* (Leuven: Peeters, 1990). See also P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983).

3. B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961).

4. Gerhardsson's analysis and the results he produced not only bear on the specific problems with which students of the Gospels are confronted, but rather merit application to the general cultural-societal phenomenon of the synchronic and diachronic transfer of literature, in the widest sense of the word, by means of a duality of vehicles—oral and written.

5. A survey of the discussion is presented by W.H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

One discounts the theory that the Jesus traditions arose in Jerusalem, and were ensuingly propagated from that urban centre. It is argued that the exclusively oral transfer of the Jesus traditions, in a rural and not in an urban milieu, was spontaneous and unchannelled, and that it could not be geared to authoritative memorization and passive transmission.¹

2. Students of rabbinic Judaism voice objections to his theses on the ground that they are fashioned after concepts and models which crystallized in mishnaic Judaism of the second century CE. The application of these models to traditions of nascent Christianity is deemed a fallacious anachronism.²

While Gerhardsson's theses may indeed stand in need of revision or adjustments,³ many of his arguments have not lost their validity. It seems therefore appropriate to take some of his basic tenets as the point of departure in my ensuing deliberations, and to address my remarks primarily to a desideratum to which he drew attention.

In the introduction to *Memory and Manuscript*, Gerhardsson states succinctly the methodological considerations which underlie his undertaking: 'As in all other historical research, it is convenient to begin by attempting to gain a picture of the corresponding situation in the surrounding milieu, which in this case is the Jewish milieu'.⁴

This statement engenders some reservation. One wonders whether the investigation of the phenomenon of tradition and transmission in early Christianity should not be initially attempted from within the Gospel literature before one brings to bear on its elucidation information which accrues from the analysis of the surrounding milieu,⁵ that is, the milieu of rabbinic Judaism. The comparative approach can, and often does, furnish ways and means for a better appreciation of an

1. See the pertinent passages in the comprehensive survey presented by Kelber, *Written Gospel*, esp. pp. 8-14, 207-11.

2. See, among others, M. Smith, 'A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition', *JBL* 82 (1963), pp. 176-79.

3. In subsequent publications Gerhardsson proposed significant refinements. See his *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (ConBNT, 20; Lund: Gleerup, 1964); *idem*, *The Origins of the Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

4. *Memory and Manuscript*, p. 15.

5. In my *The World of Qumran from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1989) I take this approach in the examination of various traits of the Covenanters' community structure and conceptual universe.

uncharted phenomenon. But it also entails the danger that as a result a new phenomenon will be judged by yardsticks which are not intrinsic to it. To quote W.J. Ong: 'Even great scholars tend to assimilate the unknown to the known, the unfamiliar to the familiar', and in reference to the issue under review here: 'Earlier scholars . . . modeled their ideas on oral narrative on their experience of narrative composed in writing, or their ideas of oral processes familiar to them in their own chirographic world'.¹

We should indeed not lose sight of the fact that within a given surrounding milieu, shared or partially shared cultural traits and trends can find quite disparate expressions.² Their diversity reflects specific socio-religious characteristics which account for the particular profiles of various groups within a milieu which they all share.

This is quite certainly the case in respect of the milieu in which nascent Christianity and rabbinic Judaism existed side by side, next to other Jewish socio-religious groups or schools. The multiformity of Judaism at the turn of the era has not escaped Gerhardtsson's attention. He clearly discerned the limitations which inhere in a comparison of early Christianity exclusively with rabbinic Judaism. He says: 'We shall also widen our horizons to include [n.b.] something of the surrounding Hellenistic world', and remarks that: 'It would be highly desirable for someone to devote a detailed special examination to the technique of transmission within the various groups and movements of the Hellenistic world during the centuries around the dawn of Christianity'.³ A response to that challenge is Professor Aune's paper 'Oral Tradition in the Hellenistic World outside Judaism', presented at this symposium.

Gerhardtsson further indicates that he gave only marginal consideration to one other important area: 'For a number of reasons, we shall concentrate on the main currents within Judaism, devoting only limited attention to the sectarian movements which were to be found on both sides of this mainstream'.⁴

1. In Kelber, *Written Gospel*, p. xiii.

2. I illustrated this problem with reference to the Hebrew Bible in 'The Comparative Method—Principle and Problems', in *Göttingen Congress Volume* (VTSup, 28; ed. J.A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 320-56.

3. *Memory and Manuscript*.

4. This description stands in need of clarification. I presume that it is meant to define, on the one hand, movements which were less strict in the adherence to the

It is somewhat surprising that this point was not picked up in the *Guidelines Adopted for Writing the Position Paper* in which a 'Summary List of all Major Questions Pertaining to the Synoptic Problem' is given. The document names in par. III three categories of sources which are expected to contain evidence closely related to the Gospels and which, therefore, may play a role in the theories proposed: tannaitic Judaism, Hellenistic culture, and Patristic literature. The sectarian movements are entirely omitted from this roster.¹

But those sectarian movements must certainly be brought under scrutiny in the endeavour to gauge the entire extent of information which can be gleaned from the milieu that surrounded early Christianity. Only a full review of the available information pertaining to these dissident groups can produce a balanced assessment of the evidence gained from the surrounding milieu, relative to the place and the function of memory and manuscript in the Gospel tradition.

An exhaustive examination of all socio-religious movements in Judaism in the centuries before the destruction of the Second Temple cannot be attempted in the present framework. But a beginning can be made. I propose to focus my discussion on evidence which hails from a dissident movement that flourished at the turn of the era and came to our knowledge not more than four decades ago, namely the Qumran Covenanters and their peculiar literature.

The potential relevancy of the Qumran material to the issue under examination is obvious. Indeed, much has been written on the putative connections between the Judean Desert Covenanters and early Christianity. This wider area of study cannot and need not be reviewed here. What concerns us is the possibility that the Qumran finds may actually shed some light on contemporary processes of tradition formation which could be profitably compared with the processes that were at work in the initial composition and subsequent transmission of the Gospels.

Also in this instance, we must proceed with circumspection. Scholars have at times floated unbalanced assumptions with regard to presumed historical links between the Qumran Yahad and early Christianity. But those excessive claims do not justify Kelber's

Law, i.e., were less nomistic and, on the other hand, groups like the Qumranites that propagated a hyper-nomistic stance.

1. See Dungan, 'Historical Note', pp. 7-8.

dismissal of the Qumran material as being entirely irrelevant for Gospel research:

While the Dead Sea Scrolls have advanced our knowledge of literate Judaism beyond all expectations, direct historical, sociological, and linguistic parallels drawn between the covenants and Christian beginnings are nevertheless for the most part misleading. Qumran originated in an internal priestly struggle and by separation from the center of power. The Christian movement, however, came into existence in response to an itinerant, charismatic prophet.¹ Qumran's Teacher of Righteousness was presumably of Zadokite lineage and an accomplished student of Scripture, as was the core group of his original followers. By contrast, neither the founding figure of the Christian movement nor the nucleus of his early followers enjoyed the educational privileges that came with priestly descent. Qumran formed a tightly controlled community, whereas the Jesus movement began with a scattering of individuals and groups of people. The dissenting priests were heirs to a sophisticated urban culture of scriptural learning and handling of texts. But there is nothing in the formative stage of the Jesus movement to suggest the scriptorium as the cradle or locus of transmission of traditions. These conspicuous differences must alert us against projecting the literary proficiency of the Qumran scribal experts upon early synoptic processes of transmission.²

It is fallacious to go to the other extreme and rule out *ab initio* the very possibility that there existed a partial similarity between the Covenanters' community and nascent Christianity.

Kelber's intent to safeguard the singularity of the Jesus movement, to highlight its rural setting and the orality of its traditions, led him to overstress some (presumably) dissimilar characteristics of the Covenanters and seemingly to misinterpret others (see below). As a result, he pictures the Qumran community as the counterpoint of early Christianity. While in some respects, for example, in the appreciation and observance of ritual law or the Law as such, the hypnomian Yahad is indeed diametrically opposed to Christianity, in others these two schools in Second Temple Judaism display rather similar features, as scholars have shown.

Differing from Kelber's total negation of any comparability, I propose:

1. B. Malina discusses this question in 'Jesus as Charismatic Leader', *BTB* 14 (1984), pp. 55-62.

2. Kelber, *Written Gospel*, p. 15. Kelber's highly simplified description of the setting of the Covenanters' community contains preconceived notions and inaccuracies.

- a. that by its very nature Qumran literature reflects a socio-religious structure which bears much resemblance to the structure of the early Christian community;
- b. that the evidence culled from the Qumran scrolls can play an important role in the investigation of the functions of memory and manuscript in the history of Gospel transmission;¹
- c. that the study of the Qumran material holds out greater promise than rabbinic literature of the mishnaic period for gauging, to quote David Dungan,² the behaviour of sacred traditions in oral cultures such as first century Palestinian Judaism [which means Judaism at the turn of the era, S.T.] is alleged to have been.³

2. *Affinities between the Qumran Community and Early Christianity*

Abiding by the maxim that an analysis from within should precede the comparative thrust, I shall direct my remarks specifically to the Covenanters' community, or rather 'Commune', and to the singular corpus of documents which issued from the Qumran caves. Nevertheless, I shall not altogether refrain from drawing attention to aspects of the Qumran milieu which appear to bear on phenomena which reveal, *pace* Kelber, the dichotomy between oral tradition and written transmission in early Christianity, with the very genre of the written Gospel presumably bearing witness to the intent to provide a radical alternative to a preceding tradition.⁴

Permit me to preface my discussion of the Qumran material by some introductory remarks. By way of apology, it should be stated that information on many details pertaining to the Qumran Commune is still incomplete or even sketchy. Not all documents retrieved from the caves have been put at the disposal of scholars and the still unknown materials may indeed contain new and important data. But we must also expect that an occasional pivotal issue will remain

1. I paraphrase here a question which the proponents of the various theories were asked to consider in their position papers. See Dungan, 'Historical Note'.

2. See Dungan, 'Historical Note'.

3. See further B. Gerhardsson, *The Gospel Tradition* (ConBNT, 15; Lund: Gleerup, 1986).

4. Kelber, *Written Gospel*, p. xvii.

shrouded in mystery even after all the available scrolls and fragments have been published.

It will suffice to mention only some of the questions which still demand an answer. We have no means of fathoming the motivations of the individuals who joined the New Covenant, nor do we know their backgrounds and former socio-religious associations. We can only partially appreciate the Covenanters' theology and retrace their community structure. Our knowledge of the history of the Yaḥad is rather limited, and we are almost entirely ignorant of the identity and biography of their protagonist, the Teacher of Righteousness (or Righteous Teacher),¹ and of his ultimate fate² (not to mention the identity and biography of his major antagonist, the Wicked Priest). We cannot ascertain the provenance of the writings which presumably were brought to Qumran by new recruits who joined the Commune,³ nor the identity of the authors who produced the documents which exhibit an intrinsically Qumranian theology.

The expectation raised by the first Qumran discoveries that a sustained and painstaking analysis of the finds would enlighten us about the history of the Jewish people in the last centuries BCE, and about

1. Kelber's over-optimistic assessment of the state of our information is not borne out by the facts.

2. These weighty factors will have to be brought into account in the envisaged comparison of the behaviour of Qumran cultic traditions with those reflected in early Christian literature.

3. It is still debated whether the MSS discovered in the caves were penned at Qumran or whether they were brought there by members of the community, presumably from Jerusalem. For this latter view see K.H. Rengstorf, *Kirbet Qumran und die Bibliothek vom Toten Meer* (Studia Delitzschiana, 5; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1960); E.Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 QIsa)* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), pp. 85-95; and especially N. Golb, 'The Problem of Origin and Identification of the Dead Sea Scrolls', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 124 (1980), pp. 1-24; *idem*, 'The Dead Sea Scrolls, a New Perspective', *The American Scholar* (Spring 1989), pp. 177-207. The truth seems to lie somewhere in the middle. It stands to reason that some MSS, predominantly of biblical books, were indeed imported, while the characteristically Covenanters' works were authored at Qumran or copied there. But we have no secure means of definitively establishing the provenance of any MS. A persuasive roster of 'objective' linguistic and scribal criteria for separating local from imported scrolls was suggested by E. Tov, 'The Orthography and Language of the Hebrew Scrolls found at Qumran', *Textus* 13 (1986), pp. 31-57; *idem*, 'Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts from the Judaean Desert: their Contribution to Textual Criticism', *JJS* 38 (1980), pp. 5-37.

concepts and beliefs of pre-rabbinic or early rabbinic Judaism, did not materialize. The published Qumran documents do not offer unequivocal information pertaining to Jewish history at the turn of the era. As a result we are like the blind groping their way with regard to many open questions, not unlike the Covenanters who experienced a period of initial bewilderment. However, while their perplexity lasted for only twenty years (CD 1.9-10), we have already been beset by uncertainties for the proverbial span of forty years which biblical tradition accords to one generation.

Notwithstanding these unknown factors and others not mentioned, the scrolls nevertheless contain tangible and often detailed information pertaining to the Covenanters' concepts and beliefs, culture and community structure, the intrinsic tenets of their ethos and their religious outlook.

The recoverable data make possible and actually invite a comparison of the Yahad's sacred traditions with those of early Christianity. I shall once again restrict myself to pointing out some of the more weighty relevant facets:

1. It is *communis opinio* that the copies of the writings found in the caves which display a specifically Qumranian outlook were penned in the second and first centuries BCE. None can be dated later than the middle of the first century CE. It follows that all these compositions were authored during that very span of time. Since the Qumran manuscripts are not necessarily autographs, we may presume that some of the works preserved predate that period, viz. that they originated not later than in the third century BCE.¹ It follows that in their totality the Qumran writings mirror a socio-religious tradition which was current in Second Temple Judaism. In part it was contemporaneous with the sacred traditions of nascent Christianity, in part it preceded them.

2. Having been produced for the most part in the last centuries BCE, the Qumran compositions take their place between the Hebrew Bible and the Mishnah,² and thus, to use a different simile, afford the student of that age some, albeit limited, means for partially inscribing the blank page between the two Testaments.

1. Some scholars suggest an even earlier date for certain texts, such as the *Temple Scroll*.

2. 'Between the Hebrew Bible and the Mishnah' is in fact the title of the first in the above-mentioned collection of essays, *The World of Qumran*.

3. The Qumran scrolls are the only authentic manuscript evidence from the crucial period in which, on the one hand, (pre-)mishnaic Judaism crystallized, and on the other hand, Christianity. Then and there both these major schools formulated their distinctive claims to the heritage of biblical Israel, and severally fashioned their existential interpretation of that heritage.

4. Notwithstanding the lacunae in our information, we can reconstitute from the Qumran scrolls a self-portrait of a Jewish community at the turn of the era such as cannot be achieved from any other ancient source for any other socio-religious entity in ancient Judaism, nor seemingly in antiquity altogether.

5. At this juncture we should mention a trait which sets the Yahad clearly apart from mishnaic Judaism. The distinctive leader-led relationship which determines the functions and the status of the Righteous Teacher vis à vis his followers differs intrinsically from the societal structure of mainstream Judaism. Equally, the undisputed authority which the Teacher commands within his community, and his singularity which, in Weberian categories, springs from personal charisma,¹ bear no comparison with the diffuse democratic authority which mishnaic tradition bestowed upon the sage. True, rabbinic Judaism elevated some personalities above their peers. But the status of those leaders, like the head of the Synhedrion, is rather that of *primus inter pares*. It arises out of institutional charisma and is enshrined in societal organisms.

6. The Qumran documents are contemporaneous with the events depicted in them. They contain, as was said, first-hand information on the Covenanters' sacred traditions. The contemporaneity sets these reports off to advantage from the retrospective references to the late Second Temple period which are preserved in the rabbinic and in the Christian literature, and in Hellenistic writings. True, the information encompassed in the Qumran writings is most probably marred by distortions which can be expected to colour the communal self-portrait of a group of dissenters. Their documents must indeed be

1. M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1925), pp. 140ff. (ET: *Economy and Society: an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 1-3 [ed. G. Roth and C. Wittich; New York: Bedminster, 1968], pp. 241ff.); *idem*, *Ancient Judaism* (trans. H.H. Gerth and D. Martindale; Glencoe: Free Press, 1952), p. 395; *idem*, *On Charisma and Institution Building* (ed. S.N. Eisenstadt; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 39, 54.

read with circumspection. But they nevertheless present to the reader a true-to-life likeness of the behaviour of sacred traditions in a Jewish community that flourished at the turn of the era, and of the literary forms in which ideas and concepts coagulated and were ensuingly handed down in that community.

Without minimizing the manifest differences between the Qumran Commune and early Christianity, between the Qumran writings and the Gospels, the above-mentioned characteristics suffice to point up an intrinsic resemblance of the Covenanters' community structure and leadership pattern with that of the early Christian community, both essentially differing from the societal structure of mainstream Judaism. We may assume that this resemblance would also find an expression in their several sacred traditions.

Traditions, whether verbal or practical, oral or written,¹ are expressions of the society that forms and promulgates them.² In the case of Qumran, we are concerned with traditions of a tightly structured religious entity defined by the principle of election. The Yahad, like Jesus and his flock, stood in evident opposition to the mainstream establishment that based itself on the principle of ascription. One group like the other conceived of itself as the only true representative of the People of Israel. The mainstream community applied the notion of natural ascription to all who were considered Jews on the strength of birth and who had not flagrantly violated the basic tenets of Judaism.³ In contrast, the Qumran Yahad conferred ascription to the

1. There is no justification for Kelber's limiting the societal enrootment to oral traditions: 'Oral speech is invariably socialized. Spoken words have no life apart from speakers and hearers; they always transpire in social contexts. If we are to honor speech, we must honor the lifeworld of the people as well. This means that a theory of oral transmission is deficient unless it embraces the social dimension' (*Written Gospel*, p. 23). It would appear that here the protagonist of 'orality' abstracts his model from later societies that were much more writing-conscious than were either early Christianity or the Covenanters, or in fact also mainstream Judaism. At that early stage when writing was, comparatively speaking, a rare accomplishment, the societal connection pertained not only to the aural but also to the visual, i.e., to both oral and written traditions.

2. D. Knight offers a succinct summary of the characteristics of *traditio* and *traditum* in reference to biblical Israel in his study *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel* (SBLDS, 9; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1973), pp. 5-20.

3. See G. Forkman, *The Limits of the Religious Community: Expulsion from the Religious Community within the Qumran Sect, within Rabbinic Judaism and within*

chosen people only upon members of their own elective fellowship, denying it to all other Jews, not to mention non-Jews. Christianity replaced ascription altogether by election.

To put it differently: mishnaic (or proto-mishnaic) Judaism identified the nation of Israel as being the in-group that must be kept apart from ethnic outsiders. Qumran identified the elite core of Israel as being the inner-group that separated from the in-group whose iniquity had voided its members' claim to being chosen. In the conceptual world of Christianity, chosenness became totally divorced from nationhood.¹

This characterization of the Yaḥad's concept of election puts in relief the otherness of the Covenanters' traditions in comparison with the traditions of early Christianity. But at the same time, the traditions of both these dissident groups were seemingly cast in literary forms, whether oral or written, which differed intrinsically from the forms in which traditions took root in mainstream Judaism.

3. Oral Law and Written Law

Gerhardsson's comparison of the modes in which the Gospel traditions were handed down with the rabbinic categories תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה was rather critically received by students of rabbinic literature. One argued, as already said, that these terms and the concepts to which they give expression are rooted in the world of the Mishnah of the first and second centuries CE, and that their application to the traditions of early Christianity must be deemed an anachronism.² We

Primitive Christianity (trans. P. Sjoelander; ConBNT, 5; Lund: Gleerup, 1972), pp. 87-114.

1. I proposed this three-tier model as an adjustment of M. Weber's 'in-group/out-group' dichotomy in 'The Emergence of Jewish Sectarianism in the Early Second Temple Period', in *King, Cult and Calendar in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), pp. 185-201.

2. The term 'oral law' is first used in the anecdote about the proselyte who asked Shammai, 'How many *toroth* have you?' and received the reply, 'Two, the written Torah and the oral Torah' (*b. Shab.* 31a). I.H. Weiss (*Dor Dor we Dorshaw* [New York: Platt & Minkus, 1924], part I, p. 1) opines that later Sages ascribed the saying to Shammai ('put it in his mouth'). Y. Baer ('The Historical Foundations of the Halakha', *Zion* 22 [1962], p. 128 n. 22a [Hebrew]), agrees with Weiss, but concedes that his view cannot be proven. See further W. Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I (Strasbourg: Trübner), p. 76 n. 4; Urbach, *Sages*, p. 290 n. 19. Rabban Gamaliel is reported to have given a similar reply to the general Agnitus (possibly to

may add that the applicability of the rabbinic differentiation between two tradition complexes, one oral the other written, with the Gospel traditions, is put in question by sociological considerations which arise, as pointed out, from the social structure and religious outlook of the dissident Christian community, which are quite different from the lifestance of the mainstream Jewish establishment. These strictures do not invalidate a comparison of the ways in which the Gospels were handed down with the behaviour of sacred traditions at Qumran. If we could ascertain the presence of the dichotomy 'oral tradition versus written transmission' in the Covenanters' conceptual world, neither of the above objections could be raised against abstracting these concepts from the Yahad framework and applying them to the description of the behaviour of sacred traditions in early Christianity. Since the Qumran Yahad emerged before Christianity, no anachronism would make such a transfer illegitimate. Moreover, keeping in mind the acclaimed interdependence of traditions and society, the posited similarity of the Covenanters' community structure and focal societal traits of early Christianity would give credence to the thesis that this similarity extends also to the ways in which both groups formed their traditions and handed them down.

Before probing the question whether the dichotomy *תורה שבכתב* and *תורה שבעל פה*, or oral tradition and written transmission, is indeed pertinent to the Covenanters' sacred traditions, we should first give some thought to the alleged meaning of these terms and their use in rabbinic literature. This matter too can be presented only in rough outline.

Reports on debates which pertain to the circumscription of the biblical canon suggest that the Sages differentiated between four categories of writings:

- a. The biblical books, known by the appellations sacred writings,¹ readings, *miqra*', torah, etc.,² constituted the corpus designated *תורה שבכתב*.

be read 'Antonius', Urbach, *Sages*, n. 20). In *Sifre Deut.* par. 351, p. 408 and in *Midr. Tannaim*, p. 215, the text has this conversation take place between R. Johanan ben Zakkai and the general (*hegmon*) Agrippa.

1. Note that this corpus is referred to both as 'writings' and as 'readings'.

2. For a survey of the use of these terms in rabbinic literature, see S. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture—the Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence*. (Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences; Hamden, CT: Archon, 1971), pp. 56-72.

- b. This corpus was kept apart from the Sages' own teachings and traditions which were *in toto* subsumed under the heading תורה שבעל פה.
- c. Books designated חיצינים.
- d. Sundry literary works which fall outside the above three categories, and which do not have a common denominator. We find scattered references to translations of biblical books into Aramaic, collections of prayers, etc. In this group may have been included the writings of heretics and compositions of foreign origin which were possibly current in Greek, such as the somewhat nebulous ספרי המירום (*m. Yad.* 4.6).¹

I propose briefly to discuss these four groups in reverse order.

Group (d) is of the least importance for our concern. We can dispose of it without further ado and turn our attention to the remaining categories.

Group (c) consists of 'books' known to have been authored after a cut-off date which is defined rather vaguely מכאן ואילך, 'from hereon'. This expression appears to be coterminous with the collocation 'after the demise of the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi'. Both terms refer to a time after the end of the biblical period, when books had been produced under divine inspiration (see below). Books authored after that date do not have upon them the stamp of (prophetic) inspiration. They are חיצינים, viz. they are by definition extraneous to the category of תורה שבעל פה, and are expressly excluded from the biblical canon. At the same time, they also stand outside the category תורה שבע'פ. One such work is the collection of Proverbs ascribed to Ben Sira (*t. Yad.* 2.13; *y. Sanh.* 27c-28a), mentioned recurrently in rabbinic literature, and seemingly held in high esteem. This group (c) certainly comprised additional Hebrew compilations. But none, including Ben Sira, was invested with binding authority. Whereas translations of some חיצינים were included in the biblical Canon of the Church among the apocrypha, not one of these books was preserved in the original Hebrew version in the tradition of mainstream Judaism.²

1. This is probably the title of a Homeric work with the Greek name *Homeros* mispronounced and wrongly transliterated.

2. As is well known, partial Hebrew copies of Ben Sira were discovered at the end of the last century in the Cairo Genizah, and more recently on Masada. See

Before the status of חיצונים at Qumran is brought under scrutiny (see below), we must give some thought to the connotation of the categories (a) תורה שבכתב and (b) תורה שבעל פה in their rabbinic setting. Both categories are quite definitely invested with binding although differently accentuated authority, and are manifestly held separate from groups (c) and (d). Therefore, תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה are best discussed in conjunction with each other.

4. *The Authority of Two Eras*

We should be reminded that the term תורה שבעל פה, which distinguishes rabbinic teachings from תורה שבכתב, is first used in post-Mishnah sources, and that because of this lateness the application of the dichotomy implied by these expressions to the issue of memory and manuscript in the Gospel tradition is considered an anachronism. To quote one of the critics:

The mythic category of 'Oral Torah' makes its appearance. . . only with the [Talmud] Yerushalmi and not in any document closed prior to that time, although a notion of a revelation over and above Scripture—not called 'oral Torah' to be sure—comes to expression in [Tractate] Avot. Implicitly, moreover, certain sayings of the Mishnah itself, e.g. concerning rulings of the Torah and rulings of sages, may contain the notion of a secondary tradition, beyond revelation. But that tradition is not called 'the oral Torah' . . . Even in the [Talmud] Yerushalmi the mythic statement of the matter . . . is lacking. It is only in the [Talmud] Bavli, e.g. in the famous story of Hillel and Shammai and the convert at b. Shab. 30b-31a, that the matter is fully explicit.¹

In view of this objection it must first be ascertained whether or not the contrasting pair תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה, and the implied dichotomy 'written versus oral', can at all be traced in the vocabulary of the Covenanters, and whether the concepts which underlie them are at all pertinent to their pre-Christian belief system.

The Sages accorded unique sanctity to the books of the תורה שבכתב, viz. to the Hebrew Bible, which they considered to have been authored under divine inspiration prior to the death of the last biblical prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi or, according to a later tradition, before

Y. Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1965). Hebrew fragments of several *apocrypha* were found at Qumran; see below.

1. Neusner, *Oral Tradition*, p. 152.

the days of Alexander the Macedonian (*Seder 'Olam Rabbah* 30).¹

These books were further defined by a rather puzzling trait: they were considered to be *מסמאים את הידים*. The significance of this expression cannot be unequivocally established. Its exact meaning may have already escaped the knowledge of the rabbinic tradents, who offer seemingly far-fetched suggestions towards its explanation.² The prevalent English rendition 'defile the hands' and similar translations in other languages are etymologically correct, but they do not convey the intrinsic technical sense of the Hebrew collocation. It is rather doubtful whether it refers to matters of purity. We do not find in our sources a reference to defilement actually incurred by the handling of books which are said to be *מסמאים את הידים*, nor of any purification ritual which the contact with defiling objects routinely entails. Quite to the contrary, the expression *מסמאים את הידים* defines and highlights the manifestly sacred and exclusive status of the biblical books in which no extra-canonical work has a part. Whatever the original meaning of the term, it must be understood as a cipher which had a very special and restricted applicability. Positively, *מסמאים את הידים* pertains to acclaimed and authoritative books which found their place in the biblical canon. Negatively, *אינם מסמאים את הידים* defines books of the category *חיצוניים* which appear to have stood a chance of infiltrating the canon and were ostentatiously debarred from it. The collocations *מסמאים אינם* and in contrast *מסמאים את הידים* are never used in reference to compositions of the category *תורה שבעל פה* which were extra-biblical by definition, and were never considered candidates for inclusion in the *תורה שבכתב*.

It follows that the various expressions mentioned above, to which others could be added,³ set the biblical books (a) apart not only from

1. B. Ratner (ed.), *Seder Olam Rabbah* (Vilna: Romm, 1890; reprinted with an introduction by S.K. Mirsky; Jerusalem: Rabbi Kook Foundation, 1966); A. Marx (ed.), *Seder Olam* (Berlin: Itzkowski, 1903).

2. Leiman (*Canonization*, pp. 102-20) surveys the putative rabbinic interpretations of this term.

3. In this context belong, e.g., collocations which employ the term *ganaz*, 'to take out of circulation'. For an analysis of this specialized vocabulary, see S. Talmon, 'Heiliges Schrifttum und Kanonische Bücher aus jüdischer Sicht-Ueberlegungen zur Ausbildung der Grösse "Die Schrift" im Judentum', in *Mitte der Schrift? Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch, Texte des Berner Symposium vom 6-12 Januar 1985* (ed. M. Klopfenstein, U. Luz, S. Talmon and E. Tov; Judaica et Christiana, 11; Bern: Lang, 1987), pp. 66-79.

the books included in groups (c) and (d) but also, and more importantly, from those which come under the heading חזרה שבעל פה (b).

Rabbinic tradition has it that the categories חזרה שבכתב and חזרה שבעל פה are entirely distinct and are marked by totally different characteristics: 'the language of the Torah (i.e. the Bible) is one thing, the language of the Sages another' (*m. Abod. Zar.* 58; *b. Roš. Haš.* 5a, 15a; *b. Men.* 65a). In this context, the Hebrew term לשון cannot be taken in a restrictive sense to connote only the particular linguistic medium in which the one and the other set of literature was cast. Rather, it must be understood as also comprehending terminology, style and conceptual content. The pithy statement, 'the language of the Torah is one thing, the language of the Sages another', actually declares the biblical writings to be fundamentally dissimilar from rabbinic literature. Beyond that, the saying should be understood as a succinct expression of the Sages' appreciation of their own world as being altogether and radically different from the existential setting of biblical man.¹

The intended distinction between the world of biblical Israel and the post-biblical² world of the Sages further shows in the disappearance of significant literary genres from the repertoire of post-biblical mainstream Jewry, and the emergence of new literary *Gattungen*. We shall yet have occasion to give some thought to this development. At this stage of our inquiry, it must suffice to draw attention

- a. to the absence from early rabbinic literature of the *Gattung* 'diachronic historiography',³ which in the biblical canon is

1. In *b. Yom.* 9b this sensation of a decisive difference is epitomized in literary imagery: 'The fingernail of earlier [viz. the biblical] generations is better than the whole body of later [viz. the Sages' own] generations'.

2. I am using these terms here in accordance with the prevalent notion that the biblical era ended approximately in the second or first century BCE. At the same time, I am fully aware of the difficulties which inhere in any attempt to define precisely the dividing line between the biblical and the post-biblical eras by historical-chronological rather than by ideational-theological criteria. A full discussion of the matter cannot be pursued here. As I shall yet demonstrate, the problem is compounded by the Qumran Covenanters' *Eigenverständnis*, which does not seem to allow for a clear distinction between 'biblical' and 'post-biblical'.

3. Early rabbinic Judaism did not cultivate the historiographical genre. Comprehensive surveys of history in perspective will re-emerge only in mediaeval times. *Seder Olam Zuta* (6-8th century) gives an overview of Israelite history from 'Creation' to the days of the Babylonian exilarchs in the sixth century CE. This late

exemplified by the Pentateuch and the complexes Joshua–Kings, or Chronicles and Ezra–Nehemiah;

- b. to the discontinuation of the prophetic genre¹ and the genre of psalms; and
- c. to the introduction of new types of rabbinic legislative literature which differ perceptibly from the biblical legal modes.

In sum, I suggest that the terms *תורה שבכתב* and *תורה שבעל פה* bear witness to the Sages' incisive distinction between the biblical era and their own.² However, this distinction did not affect their profound persuasion that these two stages in the history of the Jewish people are inseparably linked by an inherent continuity. The variance between written and oral was but an ancillary facet of this all-embracing heterogeneity. Had the Hebrew terms been intended only to single out technical factors by which one torah was set apart from the other torah, the differentiation would have become meaningless when the Mishnah, and subsequently all rabbinic teachings, were committed to writing. But in reality, the designations *תורה שבכתב* and *תורה שבעל פה* remained in force also after the alleged initial distinction between written and oral had become obsolete. The reason for their continual currency is to be sought in the circumstance that those expressions are, in fact, catchphrases which have a much wider than a simply technical meaning. They connote the fundamental distinctness of the authoritative closed canon of biblical books from which nothing can ever be subtracted and to which nothing can ever be added, from the

work draws heavily on *Seder Olam Rabbah*, which the Palestinian Amora R. Johanan (3rd century CE) ascribes to the Tanna Jose ben Halafta (2nd century CE) and which is dedicated almost entirely to a presentation of the biblical era. See Ratner, *Seder Olam Rabbah*; Marx, *Seder Olam*; M. Grossberg (ed.), *Seder Olam Zuta* (London: Naroditsky, 1910); M.J. Weinstock (ed.), *Seder Olam Zuta ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: Metibta' Torat Hesed, 1957) J.M. Rosenthal, 'Seder Olam', *EncJud* 14 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), cols. 1092-93.

1. The eclipse of prophetic literature is an obvious corollary of the notion that after the demise of the last biblical prophets, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, (prophetic) inspiration ceased altogether. It is immaterial for my argument whether this was factually so, or whether our sources rather speak of a temporary disruption of the prophetic continuity which obtained in the biblical age. See F.E. Greenspahn, 'Why Prophecy Ceased?', *JBL* 108 (1989), pp. 37-49.

2. Greenspahn ('Why Prophecy Ceased?', p. 43) remarks on this fact, although only in relation to the alleged cessation of prophecy: 'The rabbis sensed that their time was different from the biblical period'.

equally (and in some respects even more) authoritative corpus of rabbinic literature which remained open-ended for an extended period, and actually was never closed.¹

5. *Oral and Written Law at Qumran*

Let me now turn to a compressed review of the תורה-תורה שבכתב שבעל פה dichotomy in the Qumran setting.

It can be stated categorically that there are no indications whatsoever that the Covenanters' notions in this matter were in any way similar to the views entertained by the proponents of mainstream Judaism. There is not one explicit or implicit statement in the published Qumran literature which could give grounds for thinking that the Covenanters subscribed to a clear-cut distinction between the inspired biblical writings which predated the undefinable boundary line *מכאן ואילך*, and other books authored after that date which by definition do not have upon them the stamp of (prophetic) inspiration; between books that defile the hands and others that do not defile the hands; between canonical and extracanonical books.² In sum: the total absence of relevant pronouncements suggests that unlike mishnaic Judaism, the Covenanters did not subscribe to a classification of the literary works which they preserved under the separate headings תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה, Written Torah and Oral Torah.

This general conclusion can be buttressed by some particular phenomena which bear directly on the question under scrutiny. Once again the issue is best reviewed in the order in which we reviewed the rabbinic categories.³

1. *Group (d)*. The category 'sundry compositions' is present at Qumran in manuscript fragments of florilegia, prayers and breviaries, translations of biblical books into Aramaic⁴ and Greek⁵ *et sim*. The

1. See Stemberger, *Kultur und Geschichte*.

2. I cannot enter here into a discussion of the problem of the emergence of a closed biblical canon in mainstream Judaism and the dating of the diverse stages of its development. I have presented my views on the matter in 'Heiliges Schrifttum'.

3. I have dealt with this phenomenon in some detail in 'Hebrew Bible'.

4. See A.S. van der Woude, *Le Targum de Job de la Grotte XI de Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

5. See especially D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila* (VTSup, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1963); P.W. Skehan, 'The Qumran MSS and Textual Criticism', *VTSup* 4

The materials used in the penning of such extracanonical documents—mostly leather, but also papyrus³—and the scribal techniques to which the copyists adhered, are identical with the materials used and with the scribal customs applied in the writing of biblical manuscripts. Scholars have shown that these data dovetail perfectly with the rules laid down by the rabbis for the writing of holy books, viz. for books of the *תורה שבכתב*,⁴ but were not obligatory in the penning of books of the *תורה שבעל פה* category, when these too were committed to writing.

(Leiden: Brill, 1957), pp. 155-59; *idem*, '4QLXXNum: A Pre-Christian Reworking of the Septuagint', *HTR* 70 (1977), pp. 39-50; E. Ulrich, 'The Greek MSS of the Pentateuch from Qumran, including Newly Identified MSS of Deuteronomy (4QLXXDeut)', in *De Septuaginta: Studies in Honor of J.W. Wevers on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. A. Pietersma and C. Cox; Missisauga, Ontario: Benben, 1984).

2. See S. Talmon, 'The Emergence of Institutionalized Prayer in Israel in the Light of Qumran Literature', in *Qumran, sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (BETL, 44; ed. M. Delcor; Paris: Duculot, 1978), pp. 265-84; *idem*, 'The Manual of Benedictions of the Sect of the Judean Desert', *RevQ* 8 (1960), pp. 475-500 (reprinted in *The World of Qumran from Within*, pp. 200-43).

4. See E.L. Sukenik, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: Bialik, 1955); M. Martin, *The Scribal Character of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Louvain, 1958); E. Tov, *op. cit.*, p. 128 n. 3.

5. The Covenants accorded *Jubilees*, which is extant in fragments of ten copies found in several caves, an obviously authoritative status. The book is referred to in the *Zadokite Documents* (CD 16.1-4) next to the Torah of Moses: 'In the Torah of Moses all commandments pertaining to the Covenant that God made with Israel are

should be made of the Proverbs of Ben Sira. As has been said, Ben Sira's Proverbs were highly appreciated by the Sages, and the book seems to have enjoyed an almost canonical standing. But since it was ultimately not considered *תורה שבכתב*, its original Hebrew version was not preserved in the tradition of mainstream or normative Judaism. In contrast, Hebrew fragments of that work have turned up at Qumran, proving that it was current there in writing (see also below).

What is more, extensive Hebrew fragments of a Ben Sira manuscript were found on Masada.¹ Also bits of parchments were discovered there which appear to be the remains of copies of hitherto unknown works of a seemingly apocryphal character. Among them is a piece of vellum which presumably stems from a *Genesis Apocryphon*, and another scrap which appears to hail from a *Joshua Apocryphon*.² It is possible that these fragments are remains of manuscripts which fugitives had brought to the mountain fortress. But they may also be parts of scrolls which had been in the possession of mainstream Jews who had found refuge on Masada. In this case, these small fragments would give evidence to the written transmission of extracanonical works also in the mainstream community.

It can again be shown that in reference to external appearance and technical data, these manuscripts of extracanonical works were penned in accordance with the same rules to which the ancient scribes adhered in the copying of biblical manuscripts.

3. *Group (b)*. The same pertains to scrolls which evidently are of Qumran vintage, and which *in toto* constitute the Covenanters' equivalent of the corpus of traditions which rabbinic parlance subsumes under *תורה שבעל פה*.

The most notable items in this cluster are the inherently sectarian documents, such as the *Manual of Discipline* (1QS with 1QS^{a-b}) and

accurately—*מיוקדק*—laid out'. Information concerning the progress of seasons and periods is as precisely detailed—*מיוקדק*—in the 'book of the divisions of times according to their Jubilees and Sabbath years' (see below).

1. Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll*. In this context reference should also be made to the Ben Sira fragments from the Cairo Genizah.

2. Among the small scraps of parchment from Masada, one may stem from another identified 'apocryphon', one from a 'sectarian' work, and one possibly from a copy of *Jubilees*. The editing of these finds was entrusted to me. See S. Talmon, 'Fragments of Scrolls from Masada', *Eretz Israel* 20, *Yadin Volume* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), pp. 278-86 (Hebrew).

the *Zadokite Documents* (CD), the *Temple Scroll* (11QT), the *War Scroll* (1QM), and the *Hodayot* (1QH), to mention only the better known. There is further the pesher genre whose function at Qumran parallels that of midrash in the rabbinic milieu, notwithstanding their different tenors. Special mention should be made of the not (anymore?) extant ספר הגי or ספר הגי referred to in the *Zadokite Documents* (CD 10.6), which the Covenanters evidently held in highest esteem.

In this context attention must be given to three literary genres which appear to be of particular importance for our concern.

A. The conspicuous absence of historiography from the חזרה שבעל פה of the rabbinic literary repertoire¹ reveals the Sages' conscious effort to distinguish the biblical from the post-biblical world. In contrast, the Covenanters as consciously cultivated the historiographical genre, spinning out anew the biblical thread of historical narrative which had snapped centuries before their own time. They splice their community's historical experience into the biblical account, thus presenting it as a new link in the narrative chain which opens with the creation tradition, relates the story of Israel's progress in the biblical era, and was severed in 586 BCE when the Babylonians laid Judah and Jerusalem in ruins.

1. A partial account of the events which befell the Covenanters is contained in the *Zadokite Documents*. This work exhibits an overall structure which resembles that of the Pentateuch, in particular the structure of Deuteronomy: a core of legislative materials is embedded in a frame of narrated history consisting of a string of orations, which were most probably delivered by the Righteous Teacher, the Yahad's Moses-like spiritual leader.²
2. Further items of historical information are interspersed in the pesharim, e.g., *Pesher Habakkuk* (1QpHab), *Pesher Nahum* (4QpNa), *Pesher on Psalms* (4QpPs), and in other Qumran documents of diverse literary genres.

Moreover, we have reason to assume that in the Yahad's Written

1. See above.

2. The importance of these examples of Qumran *paraenesis* will be brought under discussion later.

Torah, comprehensive historiographies were included as well. Several opuscles which seem to belong to this category are mentioned by title.

In the *Zadokite Document* (CD 4.5) a מספר is cited, probably an account of events in the Covenanters' history, from their exodus after the destruction of Jerusalem and their experiences in exile to their return.¹ That book also contained references to an uncharted future age termed אחרית הימים.² In scope, it presumably paralleled the biblical reports on the period of the return, preserved in the cluster of postexilic books: Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Ezra–Nehemiah. That cluster likewise culminates in a vision of a future age (Mal. 3.22–24).³

It is of interest to note that in CD the reference to that מספר opens with the formulaic introduction והנה. This *incipit* echoes biblical formulae which precede allusions to books which are not preserved in the canon, e.g.: 'הנה it was written [down and may be found] in the Book of Jashar' (2 Sam. 1.18); 'והנה the earlier and later events of [King] Asa's reign . . . are recorded in the annals of the kings of Judah and Israel' (2 Chron. 16.11); 'the other events of Jeroboam's reign . . . are recorded in the annals of the kings of Israel' (1 Kgs 14.19; cf. 1 Chron. 29.29; 2 Chron. 20.34; 27.7; 32.32); etc.

Particularly remarkable is the phrase 'this is the detailed [or explicit] roster of their family names' (CD 4.4–5), which brings to mind the expression at the head of the list of families who returned from the Babylonian exile: 'and all Israel registered [according to their families] and were recorded in the book of the kings of Israel' (1 Chron. 9.1).

It seems plausible that the מספר which links the end of the First Temple period with the initial stages of the Covenanters' history was actually a component of a more comprehensive account entitled קצתם לדורותם (1QS 4.13), in which the appointed epochs in

1. These three stages in the Covenanters' history must be seen as vicarious reenactments of the major phases of Israel's history in the biblical age, in the days of Moses–Joshua, as in the time of Zerubbabel and Ezra–Nehemiah.

2. For this understanding of the biblical term, see S. Talmon, *Eschatology and History in Biblical Judaism* (Ecumenical Institute of Tantur Occasional Papers, 2; Jerusalem, 1986), esp. pp. 8–16.

3. It is irrelevant to our argument whether that short passage is a secondary appendix to the book or an original part of it.

Israel's history were set out in sequence. In that work, which is not any more extant but presumably was still current at Qumran, the author had recorded divinely imparted information concerning 'the years of their [the Covenants'] existence and the full account of their epochs, for all times' (CD 2.9-10). One could speculate on the possibility that a fragment discovered in Cave 4 which its modern editor entitled 'The Ages of Creation' (4Q 180) actually stems from that same or a similar far-flung historical survey of world epochs.

The acclaimed authority of that historiographical opus is revealed in the fact that it became a source of inspiration for other Qumran writers, who employ its specific terminology and imagery in their own works. Some striking examples of presumed quotations from the *מספר* may be found in the *Hodayoth Scroll* (1QH) and in the series of speeches which in CD are ascribed to the Righteous Teacher.¹ The procedure employed resembles the custom of late biblical authors to quote from earlier books of the canon, particularly from the Pentateuch and the Prophets.

The allusions to these not (any more) extant² historiographies call to mind similar mentions in the Hebrew Bible of lost books and occasional quotations from them. Such mentions recur especially in Chronicles (e.g. 1 Chron. 29.29; 2 Chron. 9.29; 12.15; 20.34; 32.32) and Kings (1 Kgs 11.41; 14.19; 15.31; and possibly 8.13, LXX), but turn up also in Numbers (21.14), Joshua (10.12-13) and Samuel (2 Sam. 1.17-18).³

B. Many Yahad compositions are manifestly couched in an archaizing wording which evinces an intentional infusion of biblical coinage and style into the author's mishnaic vernacular. But others, which by theme and content are more closely related to the canonical writings, display a distinctly biblical terminology and imagery, and exhibit characteristics of biblical literary genres. Some examples will suffice to illustrate the persistence of biblical literary conventions at Qumran.

1. The same probably holds true for other compositions which were current in the Yahad.

2. This should not cause surprise since, as said, no copy of the obviously very significant *מספר דני* has as yet been found.

3. Leiman (*Canonization*) counts altogether 24 'lost books' corresponding to the number of books in the Hebrew Canon. See also Talmon, 'Heiliges Schrifttum', pp. 55-56; *idem*, 'Chronicles', in *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (ed. R. Alter and F. Kermode; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 367-68.

Interspersed among the 37 canonical psalms preserved in the *Psalms Scroll* of Cave 11 (11QPSa),¹ we find several compositions which are not included in either the MT or any ancient version of the biblical Book of Psalms:

1. Of one composition only one line remains (col. 27.1). This remnant is actually the closing stanza of David's last words, and therefore goes a long way to prove that in the Qumran tradition the pericope 2 Sam. 23.1-7 was accorded the status of a psalm.
2. Three songs (cols. 18-19) had been previously known in Syriac translation from a mediaeval homiletic treatise by the Nestorian patriarch Elias of Anbar. One of them is extant as Psalm 151 in the LXX, the Vulgate and the Syro-Hexaplar.²
3. Next to three additional but altogether unknown songs (cols. 19, 22, 26), we find in 11QPSa (cols. 21.11; 22.1) a variant version of Ben Sira 51.13-30.
4. A prose text at the end of 11QPSa (col. 27) brings the number of extracanonical compositions in 11QPSa to nine. It lists diverse types of songs and prayers ascribed to King David, and gives their sum total as 4050.³

In addition to this cluster of new songs in 11QPSa, several further psalm-like pieces were found in other Qumran caves.⁴

We cannot say for certain whether all those supernumerary psalms or only some are of Qumran vintage. It stands to reason that songs which do not exhibit recognizable Yahad traits, like the *Apostrophe to Zion* (11QPSa col. 27), had a wider currency. They should be considered integral components of the general Jewish literary heritage, handed down in writing, which were imported to Qumran by new recruits who joined the Yahad.

1. See J.A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11 (11QPS^a)* (DJD, 4; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).

2. See W. Wright, 'Some Apocryphal Psalms in Syriac', *PSBA* 9 (1887), pp. 257-66; M. Noth, 'Die fünf überlieferten apokryphen Psalmen', *ZAW* 48 (1930), pp. 1-23.

3. According to 1 Kgs 5.12 the sum total of King Solomon's proverbs and songs amounted to 4005. In the Qumran tradition, either David was raised one notch above his son, or else 11QPSa contains a variant reading of the passage in 1 Kings.

4. See E.M. Schuller, *Non-Canonical Psalms from Qumran: A Pseudepigraphic Collection* (HSS, 28; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), and literature cited there.

Whatever the case may be, the Covenanters evidently invested with authoritative sanctity extracanonical psalmodic compositions which had been authored after the demise of the last prophets, viz. מבעל פה ואילך. These songs were not preserved only as חזרה שבעל פה, viz. exclusively as oral tradition, but rather were absorbed as written transmission into the Yahad's חזרה שבכתב.

C. In this context, even more weight must be accorded to the presence in the Qumran finds of 'halakhic' materials proper which were transmitted in manuscript form, viz. as חזרה שבכתב. In the later rabbinic system similar materials are without exception subsumed under the category חזרה שבעל פה. It must again suffice to illustrate the contrastive Qumran model by only a few examples:

1. The Covenanters routinely committed to writing their own extrapolations of biblical laws, as well as entirely new Yahad statutes, such as Sabbath observances and purity injunctions (CD 10.10-14; 10.21-12.2, 12-15). These innovative precepts are often clothed in formulations which echo the wording of legal passages in the Pentateuch (cf. CD 10.16ff. with Exod. 3.5; 12.9; 16.29; 19.15; Lev. 10.6, 9; 25.14; etc.), obviously with the intent to present them as equal in status with the laws of the Torah.¹ In contrast, the Sages took pains, as has been said, to reveal the *Oral Torah* character of their legal expositions by wording them in terms and literary structures which differed perceptibly from the terminology and the genres of the biblical law corpora.

2. The thesis that the Covenanters did not subscribe to a division of their sacred traditions into two separate categories, חזרה שבכתב and חזרה שבעל פה,² is borne out by the free combination in one literary framework of halakoth and interpretative adaptations of biblical laws which originated at Qumran, side by side with legal injunctions quoted practically verbatim from the Pentateuch, foremost from Deuteronomy. This procedure can be best observed in the *Temple Scroll*.

1. A more detailed discussion of this issue may be found in Talmon, 'Hebrew Bible'.

2. The Sages viewed such sectarian procedure as a sign of haughtiness which caused disputes to multiply in Israel, and so two Torahs were formed (*t. Sanh.* 1.1; *t. Sor.* 14.9; see Urbach, *Sages*, p. 299 and note 47).

3. In addition, we find at Qumran evidence for a seemingly less formal preservation in writing of traditions which in essence are Yahad parallels of what the Sages defined as Oral Torah. This type of written halakah is represented by a document which its prospective editors entitled *החזרה מעשי* (or *דברי*) *החזרה* (4QMMT), and which at the present time is known only in bare outline. It is extant in fragments of six copies which issued from Cave 4.¹

The original document appears to have been an open letter—probably written by the Teacher and presumably addressed to his antagonist, the Wicked Priest, in which the writer itemized a series of interrelated injunctions which pertain mostly, but not exclusively, to ritual purity.² The individual sections are severally introduced by the protasis ‘concerning...’, followed by details of a specific issue on which ‘we’—viz. the writer and his adherents—differ from the addressee and his followers. The author of the epistle cites in each single instance the specific halakhic interpretation of a biblical proof-text which informs the ritual observances of the members of his community. In this respect 4QMMT resembles a mishnah. Like a mishnah it contains extra-biblical torah. However, while in the rabbinic setting such extracanonical injunctions were considered *תורה שבעל פה*, viz. *oral tradition*, the Covenanters handed them down as *written transmission*.

In other traits, *החזרה מעשי* differs substantially from the Mishnah. The epistle is formulated as a pamphlet—a *Streitschrift*—which visibly reflects the writer’s undisputed authority in his community. Whereas in the Mishnah arguments for and against are discussed and weighed, and divergent or conflicting traditions are consulted before a decision is taken, the issues listed in 4QMMT are not submitted to a debate. Rather, the author of the epistle lays down the law *ex cathedra*. Again and again he threatens the addressee with damnation for eternity unless he abides by his, viz. the writer’s, interpretation of the several statutes recorded.³

1. See the preliminary report by J. Strugnell and E. Qimron, ‘An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran’, *Biblical Archaeology Today* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), pp. 400-407.

2. In its present fragmentary state, the first part of that composition, which is not necessarily its original beginning, records details of the Qumran calendar.

3. In contrast to the procedures of the Mishnah, the addressee’s evidently differing notions on these matters are not spelled out. The missing information means

Another point needs to be stressed. 4QMMT was not a part or a section of a comprehensive book or treatise, but rather a self-contained literary unit. It may actually be viewed as a pre-Christian specimen of the genus *epistle* which has wide currency in the Gospel tradition.¹ The tone and the structure of *מעשי החורה* suggest that it was initially drafted as a private letter. However, the existence of fragments of (at least) six copies indicates that 4QMMT had attained at Qumran the status of a public document of permanent value. Thus, it can be seen as a segment of what would constitute a pre-mishnaic parallel of the rabbinic *פיה שבעל חורה* preserved, however, in *writing* and not as *oral tradition*. One other aspect of *מעשי החורה* that is important for our concern should be mentioned. The text of that document may derive from a notebook, a *πίναξ* or *פנקס*, in which the writer had entered legal particulars in the form of catchphrases, possibly as a mnemotechnical device.

6. Silent Word and Spoken Word in the Bible

A synopsis of the characteristics reviewed above reveals telling differences between Qumran and rabbinic concepts. At the same time, the persuasive affinity of prominent features of the Yahad's literature with biblical traditions is brought to full light. It stands to reason that the Covenanters fostered this similarity, endeavouring to prove by it their community's claim to be the legitimate, and the only legitimate, heir to biblical Israel. This affinity engenders the surmise that by examining pertinent features of the behaviour of sacred traditions in the biblical milieu, we may gain a better understanding of the relation of oral tradition and written transmission in the Covenanters' conceptual world.

In the biblical milieu, and presumably also at Qumran, memory and

that their exact nature can be ascertained only by inference. It has been suggested that the writer of the epistle pits what rabbinic traditions would consider as Sadducean *halakhah* against the addressee's Pharisaic *halakhah*. If this could be proved, the prevalent identification of the Covenanters with the Essenes, towards which I entertain reservations, would be up for review and possibly for revision.

1. The extensive discussion of the letter genre does not stand in need of documentation. For an overview, see P. Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in des Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die apostolischen Väter* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), pp. 58-70.

manuscript were not conceived as alternatives, but rather as complementary means for the preservation of revered teachings. The two media existed one next to the other throughout the biblical era. At first orality was indeed the predominant factor in the preservation of sacred traditions. But written transmission gained ascendancy when readily transportable writing materials and implements, viz. papyrus, vellum and ink, in short a more advanced technology of writing, became accessible to an ever-growing segment of society.¹ In this developmental process the importance of oral transfer waned concomitantly, but it still continued to play an important role in the conservation of hallowed lore.

The coexistence of oral tradition and written transmission over such an extended period spells correlation rather than opposition. This complementarity has evidently not been taken into account by scholars who apply the notion of the primacy of orality to a characterization of the early Christian as well as the ancient Israelite culture, and by inference also to the Covenanters' milieu. It would seem that the discovery of the psychodynamics of primary oral cultures produced in some contemporary Western intellectuals an orality bias rather than a chirographic bias, as Walter Kelber would have it.² One appropriates the concept of primary orality from cultures with no knowledge whatsoever of writing,³ and transfers it all too easily to biblical Israel and Qumran, early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism, thus gratuitously introducing into these milieus the figment of a gaping dichotomy between oral tradition and written transmission. This procedure stands in need of revision.

At the same time, an even more basic aspect of the alleged opposition 'oral tradition versus written transmission' must be brought under scrutiny, namely the concentration of the debate on aspects of delivery exclusively. I propose to approach the issue from a different angle. It is my thesis that when bringing under consideration the behaviour of sacred traditions in the world of biblical Israel, at Qumran and in early Christianity, more attention must be given to reception and modes of reception. What counts in the transfer of

1. This aspect of the behaviour of sacred traditions in the biblical period and at the turn of the eras must be given more attention than it has received in the ongoing debate. See below.

2. *Written Gospel*, p. xv.

3. W.J. Ong *apud* Kelber, *Written Gospel*, p. xiv.

traditions is audibility, irrespective of whether the message is declaimed from memory or read from manuscript.

Reading silently with only the eyes was probably unknown in the biblical milieu. The same may be said for the Gospels, and equally for the behaviour of sacred traditions at Qumran. All reading was reading aloud,¹ and most probably intoned, in a sing-song voice. This appears to be implied by the *finis* notation which closes the account of the public reading of the Torah before the postexilic community: 'They read from the book of the Law of God, by sections² [rather than: 'clearly'] with intonation³ [rather than: 'made its sense clear'], and explained [to the people] what was read' (Neh. 8.8).⁴

In the milieu which engulfed all varieties of Judaism at the turn of the era, a text was by definition an aural text, a *spoken* writing, a performed story.⁵ The words of the message must be actually heard, so that there will be an intake by which the receptor is bound. It follows that in reference to the behaviour of sacred traditions, the real opposition was not *oral versus written*, but rather *voiced versus silent*. Orality and textuality were both deemed handmaidens of aurality.

Let me dwell on this thesis in some more detail. It appears that a tradition was not considered to have been made public, as long as it

1. This conception of reading is in no way different from the custom which prevailed in the Graeco-Roman world: 'All reading. . . was done aloud. . . speaking and writing were done for the ear, not for the eye. . . the line between speaking and writing, hearing and reading was a very narrow one' (M.A. Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989]).

2. This understanding of the term was first proposed in rabbinic literature. The Akkadian term *pirsu* has a similar connotation.

3. I connect שִׁמְרָה שִׁכֵּל with the technical term מִשְׁכֵּל which in the Psalms designates a type of song. See S. Talmon and E. Eshel, 'The *maskil* Will Be Silent in those Times (Am. 5.13)', *Shnaton: An Annual for Biblical and Near Eastern Studies* 10 (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 115-22.

4. The ritual ceremony described in Neh. 8.2-8 is mirrored in the Covenanters' portrayal of the setting of the messianic banquet over which the anointed of David and Aaron will preside (1QS^a 1.15). See S. Talmon, 'Waiting for the Messiah, the Spiritual Universe of the Qumran Covenanters', in *Judaisms and their Messiahs* (ed. J. Neusner, W.S. Green and E. Frerichs; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 128-31.

5. Tolbert (*Sowing the Gospel*) distances herself from W. Kelber's thesis 'concerning the dramatic hermeneutical shift which occurred in the Christian tradition when early *oral* material was transformed into a *written* text'.

was propagated solely in writing. Its status of binding authority was in jeopardy as long as it was not audibly proclaimed and aurally internalized. A silent text and equally inaudible speech are, as it were, the negative foil of proclamation. Being esoteric by definition, a written text of the spoken word does not reach out to the wider public. Silence defeats the very aim of verbalization, especially of sacred traditions which are meant to become public property and to be transferred diachronically from generation to generation.

Only when avoidance of publicity is intended from the outset, the words of a message would be transmitted exclusively by inaudible means, by secret oral communication or in the form of a written and sealed document. In both instances, the resulting silence is bound to evoke apprehension.

I shall first sketch the place of the silent word in the biblical culture and then outline in more detail the appreciation of the audible word, without regard to the modes of production, whether written or oral.

A. The episode of Hannah's encounter with Eli the priest in the tabernacle at Shiloh illustrates perfectly the repudiation of inaudible oral delivery. In her deep distress, Hannah prayed to God, weeping bitterly, and made a vow which the author records verbatim. But all this she did silently. Although her lips moved her voice was not heard, as if she were mumbling to herself. Modern people, accustomed to reading with the eyes and to inaudible mediation, would not take exception to this procedure. But Eli's reaction was quite different. The priest who had been watching her lips considered the woman's behaviour to reveal a lack of sobriety. Suspecting her of being drunk, 'he said to her: "go away till the wine has worn off"' (1 Sam. 1.12-14).

Eli's total misunderstanding of the situation, almost a tragedy of error, is explicable only against the background of prevailing biblical *mores*. The inaudibility of Hannah's supplication went counter to the established norm. Like communication flowing from God, in the biblical milieu prayer was obviously expected to be audible. It should be heard not alone by the worshipper and by God, but also by all members of the community present.¹

B. A written message is inaudible if not read aloud, and if also sealed is altogether inaccessible. It arouses suspicion of reprehensible

1. This aspect of aurality has a special meaning for comparatively small socio-religious groups like the Yahad and the early Christian communities. See Talmon, 'Institutionalized Prayer'.

scheming by its very nature. It will suffice to illustrate this point by making reference to two well-known biblical episodes.

When David planned Uriah's death, after having taken Bathsheba, the latter's wife, he wrote a letter in which he instructed his general Joab to make sure that Uriah would be killed in the battle against the Ammonites. Ensuingly, he made Uriah himself the bearer of that undoubtedly sealed letter to Joab (2 Sam. 11).

The Jezebel narrative is quite explicit on this point of ignominious secrecy. Plotting to bring about Naboth's death, she writes a letter in Ahab's name, accusing Naboth of high treason, seals it with Ahab's seal and sends it to the elders and notables of Naboth's city (1 Kgs 21.8-14), who sentence him to death after a sham trial.

C. The emphasis on aurality pervades all strata of the biblical literature. It finds an expression in a variety of literary patterns of which only some can be addressed here.

There is the interpersonal discourse which revolves on vocables drawn from the semantic fields of speaking and hearing. A perfect example of this pattern is the tri-partite verbal exchange in the sale of the Machpelah episode (Gen. 23). The recorded speeches are five times punctured by the phrase 'listen to me/us' (vv. 6, 8, 11, 13, 15). And twice the narrator underlines that whatever was said by the pivotal *dramatis personae*, Abraham and Ephron, was said in the hearing (literally: in the ears)¹ of the Hittites of Hebron who witnessed the negotiations (vv. 11, 13).²

The semblance of two-way communication is often maintained when no dialogue takes place at all, but rather a one-way message is reported, irrespective of whether it emanates from God or from a human source. Such passages are routinely introduced by vocables drawn from the semantic field of aurality (e.g. Isa. 42.23; Jer. 6.18-19; 13.15-17). Prominent examples of this pattern may be found, for example, in Deut. 32.1; Isa. 1.1; Ps. 78.1ff. Also instruction issuing from humans will be prefaced by 'listen to me' (Gen. 27.8, 13, 43; cf. Exod. 18.19; 1 Sam. 8.7, 9, 22; etc.), especially in Wisdom literature, for example, 'Listen, Job, attend to me' (Job 33.31), or 'Listen, my son, to your father's instruction' (Prov. 1.8; cf. 2.2; 4.1, 20; 7.24; 8.32; etc.). The same pertains to divine commandments, for example,

1. Cf. Jer. 28.7.

2. Other examples may be found in similar type-scenes, such as Ruth 1 and 4; cf. Gen. 3 and 27; Neh. 5.1-6. The biblical dialogue pattern requires a separate study.

'Now, Israel, listen to the statutes and laws which I am teaching you' (Deut. 4.1; cf. 5.1; 9.1; 20.3; Zech. 1.1; Neh. 9.34; etc.).¹

Even innermost personal contemplation will be presented as internalized dialogue. Abstract thought or deliberation is clad in dialogue phraseology, the heart listening to one's own quasi-verbalized thoughts. A decision is reached after taking counsel with one's heart (cf., e.g., Deut. 9.4 with 1QS 2.13). David and Jeroboam are said to have taken action after having thus contemplated matters which they obviously preferred not to air in public: 'David said in his heart [EB: thought] "One of these days I shall be killed by Saul"' (1 Sam. 27.1); 'Jeroboam said in his heart [EB: to himself] "The kingdom will revert to the house of David, if the people go up to sacrifice . . . in Jerusalem"' (1 Kgs 12.26).

Similarly construed is the process of reflection which precedes divine decisions. In such instances a reluctance to employ an overt anthropomorphism appears to have caused the omission of 'heart' in the context of internalized dialogue. However, God also is not steeped in thought, but rather speaks, obviously to himself. For example, 'God said "I will wipe off mankind . . . from the face of the earth"' (Gen. 6.3, 7; cf. 18.17, 20; etc.).²

The predominance of aurality as the prime medium of reception is revealed in the recurring combination of hearing with seeing, for example, 'look with your eyes and listen with your ears' (Ezek. 40.4); 'Listen, all you nations, and look at my agony' (Lam. 1.18; cf. Isa. 6.10; 32.3; Ps. 115.6; etc.). This coupling of hearing and sight can also be observed in the Covenanters' literature (e.g. 1QH 7.2-3; 18.19).

By way of synesthesia, vocables pertaining to the semantic field of sight can introduce aural reception³ and can even directly express aurality as, for example, in the words of Habakkuk who expects to receive divine instruction: 'I will watch to see what he will say to [or: through] me' (Hab. 2.1). In the Covenanters' literature, a similar

1. Illustrations of this pattern in Qumran literature will be adduced below.

2. The proposed interpretation disposes of the unwarranted explanation of this imagery as a sign of residual polytheism, especially in the Creation story, Gen. 1.

3. The imperative of רָא, viz. 'look', recurrently precedes references to speech and hearing, e.g., 'Look, you say to me' (Exod. 33.12); 'Look, I have instructed you' (Josh. 5.8); 'Look, I have listened to you' (1 Sam. 25.35); 'Look, what you say is right' (2 Sam. 15.3); 'See, I love your precepts' (Ps. 119.159); etc.

fusion of sight and hearing is reflected, for example, in a Thanksgiving Psalm: '... [the ann]unciation of your wondrous deeds will appear before the eyes of all that hearken [to you]' (1QH 18.7).¹ Other pertinent biblical examples of this usage may be found in the episode of Jeremiah's confrontation with Hananiah, the prophet from Gibeon. Their meeting apparently took place in the temple, in the presence of the priests and the people (Jer. 28). Like Abraham and Ephron in the Machpelah story,² Jeremiah wishes to make sure that his words are properly received and internalized by all present. He verbalizes this intention in the expectable and appropriate wording: 'Listen [Hananiah] to what I say in your hearing [lit., your ears] and the hearing [lit., the ears] of all the people' (v. 7). The phrase recurs three more times in the context. But in those instances it is construed with vocables pertaining to sight: 'Jeremiah the prophet said to Hananiah the prophet before the eyes [viz. in the presence] of the priests and before the eyes [viz. in the presence] of all the people' (v. 5; cf. vv. 1 and 11).

A message which is being transmitted as a written document at the same time would be proclaimed orally. It should be noted that several typical instances of the dual transmission procedure turn up in post-exilic books, which stem from a period when writing became more widespread in biblical civilization than had been the case in the era of the monarchies (see below). The following instances will illustrate this phenomenon.

The Chronicler reports that King Hezekiah of Judah dispatched couriers and sent word to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters, inviting them to come and observe the Passover in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 30.1, 10).³

Cyrus the Great is said to have publicized his famous edict in the following manner: he issued a proclamation throughout his kingdom, both by word of mouth and in writing (Ezra 1.1 // 2 Chron. 36.22).⁴

1. In mishnaic usage, the collocation *אני רואה דבריך*, literally, 'I see your words', has the inclusive meaning, 'I heard you, understood you, and agree with you'.

2. See above.

3. This episode is missing altogether in the account of Hezekiah's reign in the Book of Kings.

4. E. Bickerman ('The Edict of Cyrus in Ezra 1', *JBL* 65 [1946], pp. 249-75) opines that the passage refers to two versions: one (written in Aramaic) was intended for the Persian hierarchy (cf. Ezra 5.13-15) the other (in Hebrew) was to be proclaimed by town-criers wherever Judaeans were settled.

King Ahasuerus made his proclamations public in the same way: letters were sent to all royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in their own language, to ensure that the royal edict is heard throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom (Esth. 1.20-22; cf. 3.12-15; 8.9-10).¹

The report on Nehemiah's contention with Sanballat reflects an analogous situation. Attempting to trap Nehemiah, Sanballat sent (an invitation) to him to meet with him. In this instance the medium of communication is not specified. But the fact that Nehemiah sent messengers to him with his reply suggests that in the first instance also the message was transferred by word of mouth. When his invitation had been rejected four times, Sanballat's messenger came on a fifth occasion with an open letter whose content is ensuingly given in full detail together with Nehemiah's reply (Neh. 6.2-9).

Most important for our concern is the reflection of the combination of hearing and seeing in the coupling of written transmission with oral tradition relative to sacred traditions. The two modes are fused to such a degree that the attempt to separate them appears to be as futile as trying to unscramble an omelette. An instance in point is the instruction divinely imparted to Moses: 'record this in writing and tell it to Joshua in these words' (Exod. 17.14).

The fusion of aural and writing is convincingly revealed in the protasis of the Sinai pericope, Israel's pivotal sacred tradition: 'all the people saw the voices [of thunder] and the lightning and the trumpet sound and the mountain smoking', and in its *finis* notation: 'You saw that I have spoken to you from heaven' (Exod. 20.18-19, 22).²

And finally, the phenomenon can be appreciated in the wording of probably the most fundamental exhortation tradited in the Bible:

1. There is no mention of 'language' or 'oral proclamation' in connection with the letters written by Mordechai and Esther. These messages are exclusively addressed to the Jews in Ahasuerus's empire (Esth. 9.20, 29) and their contents were obviously not meant to become public knowledge. They may illustrate the secrecy which inheres by definition in written transmission (see below).

2. Modern translators tend to follow some ancient traditions and versions (e.g. the Samaritanus) which gratuitously introduce into the passage vocables drawn from the semantic field of hearing, and thus miss entirely the point made here. It should, though, be mentioned that the mediaeval exegete Abraham Ibn Ezra explains the apparent synesthesia as proving that 'the sense of seeing is more important than the sense of hearing'. See his commentary *ad loc.*

'Hear, O Israel,¹ the Lord is our God. . . These commandments. . . are to be kept in your heart; you shall repeat them to your sons, and speak of them. . . write them up on the doorposts of your house' (Deut. 6.4-9).

The above passages in which aurality serves as the medium by which the communicator transmits a message to the receptor(s) illustrates an essential feature of biblical literature in general, and of the behaviour of sacred traditions in particular. By painting in words,² viz. by utilizing to advantage the dramatic qualities which attach to an inherently figurative language such as biblical Hebrew,³ the communicator can transmit plastic impressions to his audience.⁴ In the biblical milieu, aurality, viz. the heard word, fulfils the function which visibility, viz. written transmission and/or pictorial narration, fulfils in cultures that are more manuscript-conscious.⁵

In sum: in the biblical world, audible delivery coupled with aural reception was considered the paramount medium for internalizing a spoken and heard text of a sacred tradition, which leads to the listener's (or listeners') acceptance of its message: *hören* becomes *Erhören (der Botschaft)* and culminates in *(Gott) hörig sein*.⁶

1. Cf. Deut. 9.1 and IQM 10.3.

2. See S. Talmon, '*Har and Midbar: An Antithetical Pair of Biblical Motifs*', in *Figurative Language in the Ancient Near East* (H. Frankfort Centenary Symposium; ed. M. Mindlin, M.J. Geller and J.E. Wansbrough; London: SOAS, 1987), pp. 117-42.

3. The frequency of verbs makes for the dramatic quality of biblical Hebrew, in which a complete syntactical unit can consist of one verb (in diverse moods, with prefixes and affixes) or of a string of verbs unbroken by other morphemes, as in Gen. 25.34; Judg. 5.27; etc.

4. Jotham's fable can serve as an illustration, Judg. 9.7-20.

5. In reference to the ancient Near East, 'pictorial narration' can best be appreciated in the technique of painting in registers, which was prevalent both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia.

6. Buber and Rosenzweig stressed this feature of Scripture most emphatically in a series of essays, and endeavoured to recapture it in their German translation of the Bible. See M. Buber and F. Rosenzweig, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1936); M. Buber, 'Der Glaube der Propheten', in *Werke*. II. *Schriften zur Bibel* (Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1964); F. Rosenzweig, 'Das Formgeheimnis der biblischen Erzählungen', in *Kleine Schriften* (Berlin: Schocken, 1937), pp. 178-81.

7. *Spoken Word and Written Word at Qumran*

The conspicuous propensity of aurality which inheres in biblical traditions handed down in written transmission equally characterizes the Covenanters' literature. As could be expected, this quality is echoed in compositions whose phraseology is patently fashioned after biblical prototypes (see above). An example may be found in the description of the inauguration ritual to which a new entrant is subjected: 'When he hears the curses of this [the Yaḥad] covenant . . . which are audibly proclaimed in this ceremony, he will take upon himself all injunctions announced' (1QS 2.12-14).¹

The biblical pattern is equally recognizable in works which bear upon them the stamp of the particular Yaḥad milieu. As has been said, such documents also exhibit the conjunction of eye with ear, of hearing with seeing, and the expansion of aurality to include visibility, by way of synesthesia. The Covenanters are admonished not to be like the Israelites in the desert who did not listen to the voice of their Creator, the instructions of their (divine) teacher (CD 3.7-8) and followed their own inclinations. Rather, they should listen to the teacher's voice (CD 8.51; cf. 1QH 4.24). This can be a reference to the Righteous Teacher. But it is quite possible that the text refers to any Yaḥad member who, on the strength of seniority, acquired the status of teacher in relation to a fellow member: the lower ranking must listen to the higher ranking (1QS 6.2; cf. CD 6.2-3 and 1QM 10.10).

Of special significance in this context is a succession of three paraenetic orations which are recorded in the first part of the *Zadokite Fragments*, and which were most probably delivered by the Righteous Teacher. The sermons are severally prefaced by the formula *וערה שמעו* (CD 1.1; 2.2; 2.14) upon which follows a string of exhortations, wrapped in a series of references to events in Israel's past or to the Covenanters' contemporary history. As has been said, the tenor of these addresses and the structure of the pericope, as of CD in its entirety, are reminiscent of the tone and the structure of Deuteronomy.

If these speeches can indeed be ascribed to the Teacher, we may assume with much confidence that they were submitted to writing

1. Cf. CD 9.12, 'Whosoever hears or knows of a theft', with Lev. 5.1, where in the same context *ראה* is used next to *ידע*. Equally the passage 1QM 10.3-7 echoes biblical texts (cf. Num. 10.9; Josh. 1.2-7; and especially Deut. 20.1-9).

almost simultaneously with their oral delivery, or after a minimal lapse of time. We have no information with regard to the exact duration of the Teacher's term of office. However, judging by some indirect indications, it seems reasonable to assume that he led his community for twenty years (cf. CD 1.9-13 with Ezek. 4.6) or for forty years (CD 8.26-38), viz. either for the life span of a generation or half a generation. In any case, in view of the Covenanters' assiduous preservation of manuscripts, whether imported to Qumran, produced locally or reproduced there, and in view of the Teacher's singular standing in the community and the momentous weight which the members attached to his message, it stands to reason that his pronouncements were collected and written down in his lifetime.

It seems that in the transfer of the Teacher's message from one medium to the other, the one-time oral tradition became written transmission without undergoing any spectacular changes. Nothing gives grounds for thinking that a dramatic hermeneutic shift occurred when his spoken words became written text. It would seem, quite to the contrary, that the written version retained the original wording, as much as the cadences of oral delivery, and the typical structure of a speech or an oration.¹ I tend to presume, although this assumption cannot be proven, that already in the Teacher's lifetime or soon after his death, his spiritual *Nachlass* became part of the Torah which the Covenanters studied periodically, audibly proclaiming his message, both from memory and from manuscript (1QS 6.7-8; etc.).

The above sample of features which characterize the Covenanters' legacy leads to the proposition that no other corpus of sacred traditions in the entire spread of Judaism at the end of the Second Temple period can as fruitfully serve as a model by which to gauge the behaviour of sacred traditions in the Gospels.

1. The Qumran evidence does not support the contention of contemporary theorists of orality that the spoken and the written word are 'contradictory and mutually exclusive' (Kelber, *Written Gospel*, p. 14).

ORALITY IN PHARISAIC-RABBINIC JUDAISM AT THE TURN OF THE ERAS

Philip S. Alexander

It has long been asserted that orality¹ played a fundamental role in the formation and transmission of Pharisaic-rabbinic tradition, and that an understanding of that role is a *sine qua non* for the understanding of rabbinic literature, and so of rabbinic Judaism. However, though much has been written on certain aspects of this subject, there is, as yet, no treatment which tries to see the subject as a whole.

The present paper aims to establish the broad agenda for such a comprehensive approach. Specifically it surveys three main areas.

1. The causes of orality in Pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism.
2. The contexts of orality.
3. The reflexes of orality in the form and presentation of the extant rabbinic texts.

The discussion is limited to the Pharisaic-rabbinic tradition: it does not attempt to deal with 'sectarian' Judaism. That is touched on elsewhere.² The analysis is largely in terms of the tannaitic/amoraic evidence and only at the end is the question raised of how far the tannaitic/amoraic picture can be used to illuminate first-century Judaism. Arguments are advanced to justify this methodology and to defend it against the charges of anachronism.

1. I use 'orality' in a deliberately ambivalent sense to cover: (a) the creation of a text in an oral environment as a piece of oral communication; and (b) the transmission of a text, however created, by oral means. I include under the latter heading any formal features of a text which are designed to assist oral transmission. It would be premature in a study such as this to demarcate sharply these two senses of orality.

2. See S. Talmon's paper, 'Oral Tradition and Written Transmission, or the Heard and the Seen Word in Judaism in the Second Temple Period', in this volume.

1. *Causes of Orality*

Two basic causes of orality in rabbinic tradition can be identified, the first related to the general cultural situation, the second to ideology.

The General Cultural Situation

Rabbinic society, like other societies in the Mediterranean basin in late antiquity, was highly literate: there were within it considerable numbers of people, not confined to small closed priestly or scribal classes, who could read,¹ and it possessed a significant body of literature which was transmitted in written form. Nevertheless orality played an important part in that society. This was due to a number of factors, the most basic of which was the lack of an efficient means of book-production. The only way copies of books could be made was laboriously by hand. The result was that books were expensive and not easy to come by. Even great scholars would probably have possessed few complete copies of books of their own. The writings they did have would have tended to be notes, excerpted from books as they became available and meant as an *aide-mémoire*. As a result memorization and oral transmission played a central role in culture. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that for the ordinary educated person what was not in the memory was not readily accessible.²

The Doctrine of the Oral Torah

This general cultural situation was powerfully reinforced in rabbinic society by an ideological stance which in effect decreed that only a certain body of canonical texts (the Holy Writings—*כתבי הקודש*)

1. One almost automatically says, 'read and write', but a distinction should be made between these skills in the ancient world. It seems that the ability to read was not always linked with the ability to write. Formal tuition in handwriting does not seem to have been part of the school curriculum. Writing was acquired by studying with a professional scribe. See S. Safrai, 'Education and the Study of the Torah', in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, II (ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; CRINT I.2; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), p. 952.

2. On the general cultural situation see the essays by Ø. Andersen ('Oral Tradition') and D. Aune ('Prolegomena to the Study of Oral Tradition in the Hellenistic World') elsewhere in this volume, and further W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA/Oxford: Harvard University Press/Oxford University Press, 1989).

should be transmitted in writing. The remainder of the tradition, which continued to grow in bulk as the generations passed, should be transmitted only in oral form. This ideological position is commonly referred to as the doctrine of the two Torahs. Much has been written on this doctrine, particularly on the questions of when it was first fully articulated, and whether or not the Pharisees subscribed to a doctrine of Oral Torah.¹ It has become rather fashionable to claim that the doctrine of Oral Torah is a late development in Judaism. I am not so sure. As I have argued elsewhere, a doctrine of two Torahs is clearly implied in the second century BCE in the *Book of Jubilees*, though it lacks there the strong rabbinic stress on the notion of orality.² In the last analysis the question of when the doctrine of an Oral Torah arose is not strictly germane to the present discussion. The basic point for us to bear in mind is that the early Rabbis, as a matter of simple fact, insisted that their traditions should be memorized and transmitted orally, and that the Pharisees probably took a similar line. Whether or not they, like the later Rabbis, regarded the traditions of the elders which they had received as 'Torah to Moses from Sinai', it is perfectly conceivable, and indeed highly probable, that they transmitted those traditions orally, and would have insisted on oral transmission as a way of distinguishing those traditions from Scripture.

2. Contexts of Orality

Orality played an important role in a variety of contexts in rabbinic society. Two of these contexts—the rabbinic school and preaching—have a particular claim on our attention, because they have arguably had a profound effect on the extant written rabbinic texts.

1. I find the recent studies of the problem of Oral Torah by E. Sanders and S. Safrai unsatisfactory, though in different ways. Sanders employs an excessively narrow definition of Oral Torah. Safrai seems simply to assume that everything that was not Bible was Oral Torah. See E. Sanders, 'Did the Pharisees Have Oral Torah?', in Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press International, 1990), pp. 97-130; S. Safrai, 'Oral Tora', in *The Literature of the Sages*, Part 1 (ed. S. Safrai; CRINT II.3.1; Assen/Philadelphia: Van Gorcum/Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 35-119.

2. See 'Retelling the Old Testament', in D.A. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson (eds.), *It is Written, Scripture Citing Scripture: Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 100-102.

Rabbinic Schools

Rabbinism was scribal in character and its central institution was not the synagogue but the school (the Yeshivah¹). All the major texts of rabbinic Judaism are to a greater or lesser extent school texts. Despite this we know surprisingly little about the organization of the Yeshivot in the talmudic period, or about the conditions in which classic rabbinic literature was created. The first detailed picture which we have is to be found in the early mediaeval histories of the schools (e.g. the Letter of Sherira Gaon), in the vast Responsa literature, and in the manuscripts from the Cairo Genizah. From these sources we can piece together a reasonably clear account of the great talmudic academies in the early Middle Ages, and then, starting from this well-documented picture, move back in time to explore the situation at earlier periods.

The great Babylonian Yeshivot of Sura and Pumbedita, which dominated Jewish religious life in the early Middle Ages, were complex institutions, involving large numbers of students and maintaining their corporate identity over long periods of time (several centuries at least).² The head of the school (ראש ישיבה), who bore the honorific title of Gaon ('Excellency'), was assisted by two senior officials, the President of the Court (אב בית דין), and the college Scribe, who was responsible, among other things, for drafting Responsa. The core of the Yeshivah consisted of a body of established scholars, traditionally seventy in number (as in the ancient Sanhedrin), arranged, perhaps only notionally, into seven 'rows' (סדרים). To be the 'head of the row' (ראש הסדר) was a position of prestige and authority. In contrast to the inner circle of past masters was an outer circle of students (known as 'sons of a master'), who received instruction in the midrash (ביה המדרש) attached to the Yeshivah.

1. For convenience I use the term 'Yeshivah' to denote a rabbinic school at any period. However, terminology differed considerably over time, and, if we exclude the dubious case of Eccl. 51.29, 'Yeshivah' acquired its normal modern sense only late.

2. The best summary of the mediaeval evidence is S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*. II. *The Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 195-211. Safrai, 'Education', is useful for the talmudic evidence. Safrai's article is rich in material, but basically it reads like an up-dated version of Maimonides's *Hilkhot Talmud Torah!* S.W. Baron (*A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, II [New York: Columbia University Press, 2nd edn, 1952], p. 421 n. 51) rightly complains about 'the large (for the most part popular and apologetical) literature on the talmudic system of education'.

The scholars did not reside permanently at the Yeshivah—many were communal officials or worked at a trade—but twice a year, for a month at a time, the whole Yeshivah assembled. These plenary sessions were known as the *kallot*. The autumn *kallah* was devoted to the detailed study of a prescribed portion of the Talmud. The spring *kallah* was reserved for issuing Responsa replying to the many religious and legal questions sent into the Yeshivah from all over the Jewish world. The Gaon presided at the *kallot*. When he lectured to the whole college he was assisted by a *turgeman*, or by a number of *turghemanim*, who broadcast the Gaon's words to the assembled company. The *turgeman* played the role of Aaron to the Gaon's Moses. Sometimes, it seems, he repeated the Gaon's words verbatim. At other times the Gaon simply gave the *turgeman* heads of discourse, which the *turgeman* then filled out from his own learning and knowledge. In sessions of general discussion and debate only the masters 'in the rows' were permitted to speak. The students observed from the fringes and learned through listening.

How much of this mediaeval picture is valid for earlier times? It is hard to say. The academies claimed great antiquity for themselves. According to one tradition they were founded during the Babylonian exile after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE (*Tanḥuma Noah* 3). According to another tradition they were founded in the early third century CE. This latter view has largely been accepted in the standard histories. Goodblatt, however, has convincingly argued that it is anachronistic.¹ A careful reading of the Babylonian Talmud shows that large ecumenical academies of the mediaeval pattern did not exist in amoraic Babylonia. In their stead we find a number of what Goodblatt felicitously calls 'disciple-circles'. These were small groups of students gathered for instruction round a particular master. The relationship between pupil and teacher in such a group was similar to the relationship between a master craftsman and his apprentices. Indeed, there is much to be said for seeing the חכמים הלמידים as apprentice lawyers.

Disciple-circles clearly differed from the ecumenical Yeshivot in a number of ways. They differed in terms of their size and complexity of organization. They also differed in terms of continuity. The disciple-circles were specific to a particular master: if the master died

1. D.M. Goodblatt, *Rabbinic Instruction in Sasanian Babylonia* (Leiden: Brill, 1975).

the disciples often disbanded, or attached themselves to another circle, or (at least some of them) set themselves up as masters in their own right. The ecumenical Yeshivot, however, maintained their corporate identities over generations: Geonim came and went, but the school endured. The ecumenical Yeshivot were supported by public funds: they were communal institutions with wide-ranging influence and authority. The disciple-circles were not communal institutions: they were established by free enterprise in which a master set himself up (sometimes in competition with other masters) and took in pupils. An ecumenical Yeshivah, almost by definition, is more likely to create authoritative editions and compilations of the traditions than is a disciple-circle. As Goodblatt rightly notes, if ecumenical Yeshivot did not emerge in Babylonia until Savoraic times (6th century CE), then we may have to date the final redaction of the Babylonian Talmud up to a hundred years later than is commonly supposed. Certainly the Babylonian Talmud as it now stands, with its wide-ranging citation of the traditions of different schools, can hardly be the product of a simple disciple-circle.

None of these differences of scale, organization and influence between the ecumenical Yeshivah and the disciple-circle should be minimized. Equally they should not be allowed to obscure the fact that there are fundamental links between the two types of institution: both are part of the same system of tertiary education; both can be seen as belonging to the same category of 'school'. Goodblatt, who plays up the differences, nevertheless recognizes that the disciple-circle is the seed from which the ecumenical Yeshivah grew. The *kallah* and *pirqa*' assemblies of the amoraic period may mark a transitional stage of development. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the relationship between the two types of school was one of simple, linear evolution. Throughout late antiquity and the Middle Ages both types existed side by side. There were *midrashim* (i.e. *בתי מדרש*) scattered throughout the Levant at the same time as the great ecumenical Yeshivot were flourishing in Iraq. The relationship between the local schools and the academies was sometimes strained, but on the whole they co-existed in a harmonious symbiosis. The two types of school co-existed in Palestine already in the talmudic period. In Palestine were to be found not only the great academies of Sepphoris and Tiberias, but much smaller schools scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The most significant link between the ecumenical Yeshivot and the disciple-circles was the fact that, despite the differences in scale, both institutions followed the same broad curriculum, employed the same methods of instruction and enshrined the same world-view and educational ideals. Memorization played an important role in instruction. The office of the *Tanna*—the professional memorizer of traditions—was ubiquitous. It was the *Tanna*'s function to carry the *Mishnah* in his head and to teach it to the students. It is unclear whether written copies of the *Mishnah* would have been available in the schools. Lieberman has argued that they would not: the *Mishnah* was actually 'published' in oral and not in written form.¹ It should be borne in mind that even if a written text had been available it would still have lacked vowels, punctuation and probably even paragraphing. So it would still have been necessary to preserve an oral tradition as to how it should be read. There is some evidence to suggest that the mediaeval academies housed libraries, but this may have been a rather late development.² Apart from possibly a Torah scroll, the whole context of education was oral. Written notes of any kind (on *megillot setarim* or *pinakes*) had no authority and were inadmissible in public discussion.

Another major element of the learning process—in addition to memorization—was dialectic. Teachers often taught by question and answer. Students were encouraged to engage in debate with their teachers and with each other. Studying dialectically with a companion (*חבר*) was encouraged. Ingenuity (*חידוש*) and casuistry (*פילפול*) were admired. Increasingly as time went on the teaching activity of the schools took the form of commentary on canonical texts, whether written (*Tanakh*) or oral (*Mishnah*). The product of that commentating activity was digested in the end into two great literary collections—the *Gemara* (= commentary on the *Mishnah*) and the *Midrashim* (= commentary on Scripture).

1. *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962), pp. 83-100.

2. The question of the ownership of books in early Jewish society has never been fully investigated. It is possible to overstress the lack of written texts. The Cairo Genizah seems to attest private ownership of books on a considerable scale in the Middle Ages. The Dead Sea Scrolls appear to be the remains of an extensive communal library. References to 'non-canonical books' (*ספרים חיצוניים*), e.g., *m. Sanh* 10.1, show that written texts other than Torah scrolls circulated in rabbinic society in talmudic times.

Though truly ecumenical Yeshivot arguably do not emerge in Palestine until the end of the second century CE, disciple-circles can be traced back into the early tannaitic period. The disciple-circles may occasionally have met in designated buildings,¹ but they could equally well function in courtyards, porticoes or vineyards. Some of the masters were peripatetic: they went round teaching with a small entourage of loyal pupils. The schools were sometimes supported by charitable donations, more often, probably, by support in kind, which might take the form of hospitality or lodging. Many scholars and their pupils appear to have worked for their living and to have studied in their spare time. Some pupils studied with the master as apprentices seeking to acquire the 'craft' which he could impart: they wanted to become lawyers. Others may have been motivated by more intangible goals: they may have been drawn to intellectual inquiry as an end in itself, or they may have been searching for spiritual improvement and a philosophy of life. The disciple-circles formed small, quasi-religious communities. The pupils ministered to the needs of the master, who was honoured not merely as a teacher of the Law but also as an exemplar: what he did was as significant as what he said. There is evidence to suggest that at least some of the disciple-circles ate communally and had a communal purse.² It is sometimes possible to detect three circles within the school. There was an inner circle of loyal disciples who stayed with the master; an outer circle of disciples who drifted in and out of the group; and finally on the outer edges was the general public who listened in on the teaching sessions and to whom occasionally the master may have directed remarks.

There is little in the general structure of the rabbinic schools, as I have sketched it, which is distinctively rabbinic. We know enough about the rabbinic schools to be able to say with confidence that they belong to a type of institution attested throughout the Middle East in late antiquity. Indeed the roots of this institution can be traced back to the ancient schools of Babylonia and Egypt.³ There are numerous

1. Note, e.g., the inscription referring to the '*Bet ha-midrash* of R. Eliezer ha-Qappar' found on a lintel from the Golan. It probably dates from the late 2nd or early 3rd century CE. See D. Orman, 'Jewish Inscriptions from Dabura in the Golan', *Tarbis* 40 (1970-71), pp. 406-408 [Hebrew].

2. See Safrai, 'Education', p. 964.

3. R. Riesner gives a useful survey of schools in the ancient Near East in the pre-Christian period in *Jesus als Lehrer* (WUNT, 2.7; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul

parallels between the rabbinic schools and schools in the Graeco-Roman world. An obvious analogue to the ecumenical Yeshivot would be the great Roman law-schools of Rome, Berytus and Constantinople, which flourished from the fifth century CE onwards. These were large, state-funded and followed a fixed curriculum which involved the study of classic texts. Such large and complex institutions were, however, unusual. As Marrou has argued, the norm was the small group of pupils gathered round a teacher—the analogue of the rabbinic disciple-circle.¹ These small schools were based on free enterprise and the teachers travelled around in search of pupils. The schools often represented themselves as passing on a body of doctrine which was traced back, sometimes through an explicit chain of tradents, to a remote and authoritative founder of the school. There was a strong emphasis on orality, and memorization played a significant role in learning. This stress on orality was not inevitable, since the communities in which it occurred were (like rabbinic society) highly literate and possessed books: it represented a definite ideological stance. That stance was dictated in part by certain views of education in which great store was laid by memory and by personal contact with the living teacher (cf. classically Plato's *Phaedrus* and the 7th Platonic *Epistle*).² It could be reinforced by 'craft values' which pervaded schools dedicated to teaching practical subjects such as engineering or medicine: one could only fully absorb the *τεχνή* by serving an apprenticeship, which involved observing the master perform, as well as hearing him teach. Orality also offered advantages in settings where instruction was essentially in the form of oral commentary on a written canonical text. By keeping the teaching oral

Siebeck], 1984), pp. 153-98, and in his article, 'Schule', in *Das Grosse Bibellexikon*, III (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1989), pp. 1410-14.

1. H.I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 3rd edn, 1969), pp. 264-65; further, L.C.A. Alexander's forthcoming article on 'Schools, Hellenistic' in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. I have discussed the analogies between rabbinic and Graeco-Roman schools in my essay 'Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis? Rabbinic Midrash and Hermeneutics in the Graeco-Roman World', in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes* (JSOTSup, 100; ed. P.R. Davies and R.T. White; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 101-24.

2. Further, L.C.A. Alexander, 'The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts', in D.J.A. Clines *et al.* (eds.), *The Bible in Three Dimensions* (JSOTSup, 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 221-48.

a distinction could be maintained between the text and the comment. The text could retain unchallenged its central role in the school, while the interpretation could remain open-ended and flexible, able to respond to new intellectual developments. An emphasis on orality could also serve the purely practical ends of legitimating and perpetuating the guild of the scholars: anyone who wished to learn had to attach himself to a competent master. Self-tuition was not a viable option. Orality promoted communality. Oral learning and teaching was not a private, individual matter but a ritualized, public, communal—even noisy—activity. By insisting on oral performance of the tradition the ancient scholars found a simple but effective way of giving expression to a school's identity and promoting its *esprit de corps*.

Preaching

The second major oral context which has influenced rabbinic literature is preaching. It is important not to make too sharp a distinction between 'preaching' and 'teaching', between the *bet ha-keneset* and the *bet ha-midrash*. Preaching took place in a variety of settings and assumed a variety of forms. Exposition of Scripture was not confined to the synagogue: it formed part of the curriculum in the *bet ha-midrash*.¹ The school could easily constitute itself as a place of public worship at times of prayer, provided a *minyan* was present. As we noted earlier, members of the general public seem at times to have listened in on classes in the schools, and the sages occasionally may have directed more popular discourses primarily at them. Preaching could also take place in the open air, at the meeting of a table-fellowship, or at a funeral. It was not necessarily linked directly to an exposition of the lectionary cycle. Preaching in the form of a moral or philosophical discourse, for which good mediaeval examples survive,² is attested already in the talmudic period. Heinemann has pointed out that *b. Shab.* 30a-b appears to contain more or less verbatim a sermon attributed to the fourth-century Palestinian homilist, Rabbi Tanḥum bar Abba.³ This sermon, which draws a parallel between the human

1. See Safrai, 'Education', p. 959.

2. A useful introduction to mediaeval Jewish preaching may be found in M. Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching 1200–1800: An Anthology* (Yale Judaica Series, 26; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

3. See J. Heinemann and J.J. Petuchowski, *Literature of the Synagogue* (New York: Behrman House, 1975), pp. 143–48. This volume contains a useful

soul and a lamp, opens, in a manner reminiscent of the *Yelammedenu*-homilies, with a halakhic question, but unlike the *Yelammedenu*-homilies it does not end with a reference to the *sidra*, but with an allusion back to the opening question. Scripture is quoted in the sermon, but the sermon itself cannot be seen as an exposition of Scripture: it is detached from the lectionary cycle. A rather similar case is found in *Massekhet Semahot* 8.13-16, which purports to give the text of a eulogy (הספד) pronounced by Rabbi Aqiva on the death of his son. Although the eulogy, which was preached sitting on a bench (ספסל) at the cemetery, is expressly described as a *derashah*, it is unrelated to the lectionary cycle and can hardly be seen as a direct exposition of any particular passage of Scripture.

Rabbinic preaching used diverse forms and occurred in diverse settings, but the bulk of the surviving material appears to relate directly to the exposition of Scripture in the context of public worship. Preaching was certainly institutionalized as part of the synagogue service by tannaitic times. Sermons were delivered on sabbaths and festivals, their purpose being to expound the biblical lection for the day. A major historical puzzle is the relation of the sermon to the Targum. Clearly an expansive Targum, which paraphrases the lesson, does not sit easily with a *derashah* within the framework of the same service. Heinemann proposes a simple chronological solution to this problem. The Targum is the older institution: originally it was expansive, but as the *derashah* developed the Targum became more literal, aggadic comment on Scripture being increasingly transferred from the province of the *meturgeman* to that of the *darshan*. This suggestion actually does not fit well the evidence, which rather points to the co-existence of an expansive Targum and a *derashah* at the same period of time. An alternative solution, which I have advocated, takes note of the fact that the expansive Targumim are normally so constructed that the *meturgeman* had the option of giving either a base translation (which was more or less literal), or of giving the base translation with the addition of certain traditional explanatory glosses. The tendency may have been to curtail the Targum if a *derashah* was to be delivered at the same service.¹ It is natural to suppose that the

(New York: Behrman House, 1975), pp. 143-48. This volume contains a useful anthology by Heinemann of sermons from the talmudic period.

1. J. Heinemann, 'Preaching [In the Talmudic Period]', *EncJud* 13 (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 994; P.S. Alexander, 'The Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the

style of the public sermon, like the style of the Targum, would have been popular in character and would have been enlivened by *aggadot*, exempla and meshalim. Public sermons would probably have differed somewhat in style from the more learned exposition of Scripture in the *bet ha-midrash*. One would expect discourse among scholars to have been more technical and demanding than preaching to the general public.

3. Reflexes of Orality in Early Rabbinic Texts

Orality and Hermeneutics

Given that orality played a major role in early rabbinic culture, the question which must now be addressed is: what discernible effect did this orality have on the transmission and the form of rabbinic literature as we now have it? The question is important for unless orality directly impinges in some way on the texts it can be little more than an archaeological curiosity of no great interest to hermeneutics. Milman Parry's work on orality in Homer was significant precisely because it offered an explanation for certain recurrent literary phenomena in the texts: it explained those phenomena in terms of the methods of composition employed by the epic poets, and so it established a framework within which a historical interpretation of the texts has to be achieved.¹

In investigating this question we should make a clear distinction between literary features intrinsic to the fabric of the texts and extrinsic mnemonic devices. There can be no doubt that rabbinic texts were passed on orally and that various means were used to assist this process. The most celebrated of these are the *simanim*. A *siman* (σημείον) in rabbinic parlance is a device aimed at helping a student to recall a complex ruling or to retain in proper order the main parts of a talmudic argument. The *siman* might take the form of a verse of Scripture (*m. 'Abod. Zar.* 1.3), or a *notariqon* (*m. Men.* 11.4), or series of keywords derived from the text (*b. Ber.* 57b). The keyword type is found only in the Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud. The keyword *simanim* do not cover the whole of the Bavli, nor are they

Delivery of the Targum', *VTSup* 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1985), p. 19.

1. M. Parry, 'Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse Making', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 41 (1930), pp. 73-148; 43 (1932), pp. 1-50.

evenly distributed among the tractates. It is a matter of debate when they were first introduced into the text. According to one view the Gemara was first written down as a series of *simanim* which were later filled out with the complete text, the 'signs' being retained because students still had to memorize the Talmud. It is equally possible, however, that these *simanim* are mediaeval additions to the Bavli after it was reduced to writing. They vary considerably from manuscript to manuscript, and it is difficult to reconcile this fact with the view that they formed the skeleton on which the present Talmud was formed. Whichever line we take in the debate, the keyword *simanim* definitely belong to the final stages of the redaction of the Bavli. They relate to the structure of the *sugyot*, and, as Louis Jacobs plausibly argues, the *sugyot* were probably not organized in their present form until Savoraic times (6th century CE).¹ There can be no doubt, however, that *simanim* were in widespread use in the amoraic schools (cf. *b. 'Erub.* 54b), and, in contrast to the keyword type, the other two types of *siman* are attested already in tannaitic materials.

We know of other extrinsic aids to the memorization of texts besides the *simanim*. Some texts were chanted or cantillated, or were studied to the accompaniment of swaying or other bodily movements.² Esoteric doctrine was passed on in catechetical fashion through the memorization of certain 'heads of doctrine' (called in the sources ראשי פסוקים or ראשי פרקים). Some Yeshivah-students, apparently in desperation, resorted even to magic and invoked an archangel called the 'Prince of Torah' (שר תורה), who reputedly could enable them to remember all the minutiae of the halakhah. When the precise wording of the texts of the prayers became important, devices were found to make sure they were recited absolutely correctly. Though these devices are classically represented by the *kavvanot* of the mediaeval Qabbalists and the Hasidei Ashkenaz, the basic techniques probably go back much earlier.

1. L. Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961), pp. 148-56, is still one of the most accessible accounts of the *simanim*.

2. 'Beruriah once came upon a student who was learning in a whisper. She rebuked him [lit., kicked him] and said, "Is it not written, 'Ordered in all things and sure' (2 Sam. 23.5). If it is 'ordered' in your two hundred and forty-eight limbs it will be 'sure', otherwise it will not be sure?"' (*b. 'Erub.* 53b-54a). Further Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, pp. 163-68.

All these mnemonic devices and strategies illustrate concretely the learning processes within the rabbinic schools, but they are essentially extraneous to the texts themselves. They are applied to texts already fully formed. They may have relevance to historical questions about the reliability of the tradition, they may even throw light on textual variants, but they can have only limited impact on the exegesis of the texts themselves. Unquestionably of greater significance for exegesis are features intrinsic to the texts—part of their warp and woof—which betray oral composition or transmission.

Style and Form in Rabbinic Texts

The question of what features of rabbinic literature betray the influence of orality is, paradoxically, bedevilled not by a lack but by an abundance of evidence. There is scarcely an aspect of the form and style of rabbinic literature which has not been attributed loosely by someone to the influence of orality. So all-pervasive is orality (on the common view) that the mind ‘boggles’ when it tries to imagine what a ‘non-oral’ rabbinic literature might have looked like. To deal with the subject of orality in rabbinic literature properly would require a comprehensive analysis of all the diverse genres of rabbinic literature. That is clearly out of the question here. We shall have to content ourselves with illustrating the problem by a broad consideration of the two major types of rabbinic discourse, viz. Mishnah and Midrash.

Mishnah. Jacob Neusner more than anyone else has tackled in detail the question of the impact of orality on the Mishnah.¹ He tries to demonstrate that the various tractates of the Mishnah can be broken down into primary units of sense—‘cognitive units’ he calls them. Each cognitive unit usually consists of a number of sentences which on their own make little or no sense, but which together make a coherent, self-contained halakhic statement. The cognitive units are framed in highly stylized, formulaic language. Neusner has analysed one of the commonest patterns in great detail. It consists basically of a protasis

1. J. Neusner, *The Memorized Torah: The Mnemonic System of the Mishnah* (Brown Judaic Series, 96; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985). I sympathize with most of Sanders’s remarks (*Jewish Law*, pp. 108ff.) on the difficulties of deciphering Neusner’s true position. I make no attempt to reconcile *Memorized Torah* with the position outlined by Neusner in, say, *Torah: From Scroll to Symbol in Formative Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985).

which describes a certain scenario, and an apodosis which gives a ruling in the light of that scenario. The protasis usually takes the form of a simple declarative sentence, a conditional clause ('if x is the case'), or a question. The apodosis is often in the form of a syzygy, i.e., two balanced statements giving contrasting rulings, usually expressed through contrasting terms such as liable/exempt, unclean/clean, prohibit/permit, unfit/fit. Neusner cites as the paradigm of this pattern *m. Ma'as. 4.2*:

Protasis:	A basket of fruit intended for the Sabbath
Apodosis:	The House of Shammai declares exempt and the House of Hillel declares liable.

The basic cognitive units are built together into larger blocks which Neusner calls 'intermediate divisions' or 'chapters'. (The 'chapters' here are *not* the same as the traditional chapter divisions of the printed text of the Mishnah. The traditional chapters were introduced very late and, unlike the tractates and the orders, do not correspond to real structural divisions within the Mishnah.) The 'chapters' are demarcated from each other first by rhetoric: they consist of a series of cognitive units displaying the same basic pattern. The basic pattern is normally repeated three times or five times, or in multiples of three or five. The 'chapters' are demarcated secondly by logic. The cognitive units in the same rhetorical pattern are normally topical instances of a single proposition or problem, which is hardly ever explicitly stated. This underlying general principle (what in traditional talmudic parlance would be known as the *kelal*) has normally to be inferred from the concrete cases presented. When the underlying *kelal* changes the change will be registered on the surface of the text by a change in the rhetorical pattern of the cognitive units. It is therefore possible, argues Neusner, confidently to segment a given tractate of the Mishnah not only into the basic cognitive units but into 'chapters' as well.

Neusner does not attempt a detailed account of how the 'chapters' were built up into tractates and the tractates into orders. However, his analysis does establish beyond dispute his contention that the Mishnah consists of highly formal, patterned speech of a very distinctive kind. The question now arises: why is the Mishnah presented in this form? What purpose does this patterning serve? Neusner has no doubt: its purpose is mnemonic. The Mishnah was constructed to be memorized, the patterns were aimed at facilitating memorization. Tradition tells us

that the Mishnah belongs to the category of חזרה שבעל פה, which Neusner suggests is best translated 'memorized Torah', and that it was, as a matter of fact, transmitted orally through the schools. Neusner claims that by analysing the text of the Mishnah he has illuminated the concept of 'memorized Torah': memorized Torah (in contrast to written Torah) is first and foremost a text like the Mishnah which is formulated in such a way as to facilitate the remembering of its exact words. The mnemonic patterning of the Mishnah serves also, he suggests, a theological purpose. The rabbis claimed to have passed on accurately the traditions they had received: what was claimed on behalf of those traditions was 'not merely essential accuracy but exact verbal correspondence with what was originally stated by the authorities standing behind the traditions'.¹ The form of the Mishnah justifies this claim with an elaborate display of just how the 'verbal correspondence' was achieved.

Neusner's analysis raises a number of important questions that are highly pertinent to our theme. The first is the question of whether, in fact, simple, formulaic, recurrent patterns are inherently more easily memorized than more complex, less repetitive patterns. Neusner simply assumes that they are. But it is surely arguable that formalization can be taken to such a degree that the text becomes undifferentiated and monotonous, and memorization is actually made more difficult. For example, it could be urged that the use of the antithetical syzygy in the Houses Disputes does not in itself help to recall the substance of the ruling. What one is likely to remember is that one is supposed to have a unit with an apodosis in the form of a syzygy, but to be at loss to recall whether the House of Hillel declares exempt and the House of Shammai declares liable, or vice versa. The fact is that with sufficient will-power, and perhaps with the aid of external mnemonic devices, it is possible to memorize long formally unstructured texts. Actors do it for a living. Clearly the psychology of memorization, for which an extensive technical literature is extant, has to be brought more directly to bear upon the discussion.

Secondly, the summary of Neusner's position presented above (which closely follows Neusner's own account) suggests a simpler, more uniform picture than is, in fact, the case. When one begins to read the small print of Neusner's argument one becomes aware that

1. Neusner, *Memorized Torah*, p. 28.

there are significant portions of the Mishnah which do not correspond to his neat schema. For example, he concedes that there are 'chapters' made up of cognitive units displaying the same rhetorical patterns which do not have an underlying unifying *kelal*. From Neusner's own standpoint these departures from the norm surely weaken the mnemonic character of the text. Neusner might find it useful to recognize, as has Arnold Goldberg in his analysis of Midrash, that the forms which he has described are 'ideal-typical', that is to say, they represent only a statistical norm. But if the forms are mnemonic then the fact that they are in some sense ideal dilutes their mnemonic character. All one can know in advance is the ideal-typical form. What one cannot predict is how the concrete tradition will diverge from the ideal.

Thirdly, Neusner is able to provide plausible rules for the construction of the smallest units of the text. He is also able plausibly to explain the creation of intermediate units ('chapters') through the repetition of the same rhetorical pattern to express topically a single underlying *kelal*. However, it is noticeable that he does not provide anywhere in his work formal rules which will convincingly explain the combination of the 'chapters' into tractates, or the tractates into orders. The formal analysis of Midrash is beset by similar problems. While formal rules have been successfully proposed for the construction of the smallest units of tradition (see below), the rules for the structuring of the intermediate units and the major composite forms remain elusive. It is indisputable that certain intermediate forms in the Midrashim (e.g. many of the *pisqa'ot* of *Pesiqta deRab Kahana*) are tightly structured discourses, but what unifies them is topic and perhaps aesthetics, not form. Topical unity is open-ended: one can always add further exemplification of the topic. Most larger units of Midrash are, in fact, rather random and unpredictable conglomerates of smaller units of material. All this suggests that insofar as orality directly affects the rabbinic texts it does so only at the level of the smaller units. The larger units of text do not provide any strong steer to memorization. This is not, of course, to suggest that if need arose the larger units could not have been memorized. Once again the point must be stressed that learning by rote of large portions of text is in the last analysis a function of perseverance and technique, not of form.

There is a final general problem to be considered. Neusner makes the interesting suggestion that the mnemonic presentation of the Mishnah can be seen as an elaborate validation of the claim that the

rabbis have preserved verbatim the traditions which they received. However, it should be noted that, as he himself observes elsewhere, the formulaic discourse of the Mishnah plays a curiously ambivalent role: it both preserves and destroys the tradition. It destroys the master's *ipsissima verba* and fits his ruling into a standard formulaic structure where it is juxtaposed to the opinions of other masters. What is preserved is only the substance of the master's thought.¹ There is a powerful drive towards anonymity in rabbinic literature: individuality and idiosyncrasy are avoided. Everything is reduced to an anonymous school style of discourse. This point is perhaps exemplified at its most extreme in the Houses Disputes: what Hillel and Shammai and their respective schools said is reduced to an abstract formula from which all individuality has been eliminated. We are at the mercy of the redactors of the Houses Disputes and can only take it on trust that they have got the substance of the various rulings right.

Midrash. Goldberg has attempted to provide the Midrash with the kind of analysis which Neusner has provided for the Mishnah.² Goldberg's form-analytical approach sets out to discover and describe the system of rules inherent in Midrash which makes Midrash the kind of verbal communication that it is. He is concerned with text-production. He analyses Midrash at three levels. First, there is the level of the basic forms, the smallest units of discourse. Midrash, like Mishnah, turns out to be built up from small, formally discrete units of text. Goldberg has isolated and described some of these basic forms, for example, the Midrash, the Dictum/Logion, the Mashal, the Ma'ašeh and the Haggadah. Although his form-analysis is very rigorous, it seems to emerge that Midrash is less tightly structured than Mishnah. For example, he defines the form Midrash (which in this context means a small, self-contained unit of exegesis) as consisting of three components: a lemma (L), a hermeneutical operation (O), and a

1. J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70*, III (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 3.

2. Most of Goldberg's work has been published in the *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge*. Little is available in English. Note, however, 'Form-analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description', *JJS* 36 (1985), pp. 159-74, and 'The Rabbinic View of Scripture', in Davies and White (eds.), *A Tribute to Geza Vermes*, pp. 153-66. Further, P. Schäfer, 'Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status Quaestionis', *JJS* 37 (1986), pp. 139-52.

Dictum (D). The vagueness of this pattern, compared to Neusner's protasis/apodosis pattern for the Mishnah, is obvious. At the second level of midrashic analysis are the higher forms, which emerge from the combination of the basic forms. Goldberg calls the investigation of the rules governing the combination of these basic forms 'function-analysis'. As with Neusner's analysis of the 'chapters' and 'tractates' of the Mishnah, Goldberg's function-analysis is much less successful than his form-analysis. At the third and highest level are the composite or distributive forms, which emerge from the combination of the higher forms. To give a simple illustration: a Mashal or a Midrash may, along with certain other basic forms, go together to make up the higher form of a homily. A collection of homilies could make up a distributive or composite form such as *Pesiqta deRab Kahana*.

Goldberg is concerned solely with the analysis of the formal features of the texts as they stand. He is apparently uninterested in considering the historical question of *why* the texts are presented as they are, or in relating the forms of Midrash to orality. However, the question of orality simply begs to be raised. Goldberg's description of Midrash runs broadly parallel to Neusner's analysis of Mishnah. If, as Neusner asserts, orality has profoundly determined the forms of Mishnah, then it is hard to resist the conclusion that it must equally have influenced the forms of Midrash. Both types of discourse are built up from small, memorizable units, cast in a relatively small number of standard formulaic patterns. Moreover, though midrashic forms are not as tightly structured as mishnaic, Midrash is linked to Scripture and that is of inestimable help in memorization. The all-pervasive base-form of Midrash is biblical lemma + comment. Scripture imposes order on midrashic discourse, and in a broad sense determines its content. By recalling Scripture (either from memory or by consulting a written text) one has a starting point from which to begin recalling by association the midrashic tradition as well. That recall will, arguably, be further helped if one understands the basic rules of midrashic text-production which Goldberg's analysis attempts to uncover.

If Neusner's and Goldberg's literary forms are linked to orality (though, as we noted, this is not as self-evident as is often supposed), then they relate to oral *transmission* of the texts, not to their oral *composition*. These patterns are not the patterns of natural speech, however formal and rhetorical. They have been artificially devised to

assist the memorization of texts, and, in fact, they could just as easily characterize texts that were created by writing as texts that originated in an oral situation. This is puzzling in the case of Midrash, for, as we argued earlier, at least some midrashic material must surely have originated in sermons. Is there any evidence among the extant Midrashim of texts that originated in the oral situation, that transcribe sermons actually preached in public? Such evidence is surprisingly hard to find. A continuous exegetical Midrash such as the *Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael* shows on the face of it little direct relationship to sermons as preached. From time to time scholars isolate segments of such texts and argue that underlying them are sermons. Heinemann has tried to make out a case for the beginning of *Sifrei Deuteronomy Va-'ethanan*,¹ largely on the grounds that this section has a high degree of thematic coherence and exhibits certain proem-like features. But the passage in question does not have a strong sense of a beginning, a middle and an end, and the reasons for isolating it from its context seem rather subjective. The *pisqa'ot* of *Pesiqta deRab Kahana* also display a strong thematic coherence, yet it would be hard to prove that they represent transcripts of homilies actually delivered in synagogue.

Only two closely related forms have any obvious claim to reflect directly preaching in synagogue—the *Petiḥah* and the *Yelammedenu*-homily. Both these forms, which are widely attested in the Midrashim, display a strong rhetorical structure that appears to reflect a common pattern of preaching. Their basic pattern, as attested in the written texts, may be set out as follows:²

1. Heinemann and Petuchowski, *Literature of the Synagogue*, pp. 119-23.

2. For basic bibliography on the *Petiḥah* and the *Yelammedenu*-homily, see H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (7th edn; Munich: Beck, 1982), pp. 230-32, 279-82.

*Petiḥah*A. *Seder*-verseB. *Petiḥah*-element1. *Petiḥah*-formula

('Rabbi X opened [פתח])

2. *Petiḥah*-verseC. *Ḥarizah*D. *Seder*-verse*Yelammedenu*A. *Seder*-verseB. *Yelammedenu*-element1. *Yelammedenu*-formula

('May our master teach us [רבינו ילמדנו])

2. Halakhah

a) Halakhic question

b) Halakhic answer ('Thus have our Masters taught [כן שנו רבותינו])

C. *Ḥarizah*D. *Seder*-verse

Heinemann has proposed a satisfactory *Sitz im Leben* for the *Petiḥah* which explains the use of the verb פתח in the *Petiḥah*-formula.¹ The *Petiḥah* originated as a liturgical element used to introduce the reading from Scripture in synagogue: it opened the biblical lection for the day. The audience knew in advance what was the portion for any given Sabbath. The *darshan* began by dramatically announcing a verse remote from the lection, often from the Hagiographa (= the *Petiḥah*-verse), and then proceeded by a device traditionally known as *ḥarizah* ('threading together' of biblical verses) to show how the *Petiḥah*-verse could, against appearances, be linked to a verse in the reading for the day (the *Seder*-verse). As a *captatio benevolentiae* this device has much to commend it. The audience's attention would be engaged as they waited to see how the connection could be made, and even, in some cases, precisely which *Seder*-verse was the target.² The *Yelammedenu*-form probably has a similar *Sitz im Leben*, and may, indeed, be a development of the *Petiḥah*, the halakhic element from the Oral Torah taking the place of the remote verse from the Scriptures. The dramatic structure of the *Yelammedenu*-homily seems to presuppose

1. J. Heinemann, 'The Proem in the Aggadic Midrashim—A Form-Critical Study', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971), pp. 100-22. Schäfer ('Die Peticha—ein Proömium?', *Kairos* 12 [1970], pp. 216-19) makes some important criticisms of Heinemann's views.

2. It should be noted, however, that the *Seder*-verse is normally the first verse of the *Seder*.

that a member of the audience posed a halakhic question which the *darshan* answered. The *darshan* then demonstrated his ingenuity by linking the halakhic question to the lection for the day.

There are indications that the transfer of the *Petiḥot* and *Yelammedenu*-homilies from the oral to the written register has significantly affected their form. The oral version of the *Petiḥah* would have begun with the announcement of the *Petiḥah*-verse, not the *Seder*-verse, as in the written texts. This is suggested by the positioning of the *Petiḥah*-formula, and by the fact that the dramatic impact would, arguably, be diminished by opening with the *Seder*-verse. It is equally unlikely that the *Yelammedenu*-homilies would have begun with the *Seder*-verse. The oral context of the Sabbath or Festival defined in advance the target *Seder*. As delivered in the synagogue the *Petiḥah*-verse/*Yelammedenu-rabbenu* opened the sermon, the announcement of the *Seder*-verse closed it and led into the reading of the Torah. But when these structures were transposed to the purely written register it became necessary to warn the reader in advance what was the *Seder*-verse, since he lacked the actual setting of the Festival or Sabbath to make this clear. Heinemann correctly noted this important change of form, but it is sometimes ignored by New Testament scholars.¹ The alleged similarities between New Testament texts and *Petiḥot*/*Yelammedenu*-homilies sometimes rely heavily on the pattern of *inclusio*. It is not noticed that *inclusio* is a feature only of the written and not of the oral form of these rabbinic homilies.

A distinction is commonly drawn between oral sermons and literary sermons, that is, between texts which in some sense directly reflect sermons that were actually preached and sermons which were *ab initio* composed purely as literary exercises for incorporation into a written text. It would certainly be unwarranted to assume that all the *Petiḥot*/*Yelammedenu*-homilies in the classic sources were actually preached. In particular many of the *Yelammedenu*-questions are so cleverly contrived that one must assume that, if they ever were actually used in an oral setting, they were 'planted'.² However, the

1. Heinemann, 'Proem', p. 104. Note also his criticisms on p. 121 n. 78, of J.W. Bowker, 'Speeches in Acts, A Study in Proem and Yelammedenu Form', *NTS* 14 (1967), pp. 96-111.

2. J. Mann's classic work, *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue* (1940; repr. New York: Ktav, 1971), attempts to explore in detail the reasons for the choice of the halakhot in the *Yelammedenu*-homilies.

distinction between oral and literary sermons is very problematic. It is hard to draw up objective criteria to distinguish one from the other. The problem is bound up with the question of how oral sermons were transmitted. Sermons would not, one imagines, have been systematically memorized by an auditor in the way that halakhot were memorized. An auditor might remember the *Seder*-verse, the *Petiḥah*-verse and the general reasoning of the *Ḥarizah* of a particularly striking sermon which he heard. Many *Petiḥot* are extremely brief and for that reason implausible in their present form as sermons. They may be sermon outlines reflecting what people remembered, or they may even be notes made by the *darshanim* in advance of public delivery, to be filled out as the occasion prompted. One point is reasonably clear. The Midrashim which we now have bear strongly the marks of a Bet Midrash origin. Though they draw on a tradition of popular synagogue preaching, they have added it to material generated by systematic exegesis of Scripture within the Yeshivah, the whole being presented within the framework of an essentially scholastic commentary.

The Rabbinic Synoptic Problem

Rabbinic literature is full of admonitions to take extreme care to pass on accurately the traditions that one has received.¹ The traditions themselves, as we have seen, appear to be cast in a form which was intended to assist accurate memorization, and various external mnemonic devices were added to reinforce careful transmission. In the light of all this it might be assumed that rabbinic tradition would be stable and reliable. Such an assumption would, however, be premature, for the question of the reliability of the tradition cannot be answered *a priori* by considering external forms, or mnemonic devices or theological assertions, but only by looking at the texts themselves. Here a paradox emerges: an examination of the texts does not confirm the assumption of reliability. Rabbinic literature is full of multiple attestations of the same traditions, and large blocks of material are duplicated in two or more places. There is, for example, an extensive overlap between the Gemarot of the two Talmuds. The Palestinian Targumim to the Pentateuch clearly present parallel versions of the same broad tradition. *Abot deRabbi Nathan* exists in two

1. See Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, pp. 130-36. Typical is the saying attributed to Eliezer ben Hyrcanus: 'I have never said in my life a thing which I did not hear from my teachers' (*b. Suk.* 28a).

quite different forms. And if one looks at the manuscripts of the classic rabbinic texts one will find evidence of substantial textual variation lurking beneath the smooth surface of the standard printed editions. When multiple attestations of the same material are compared synoptically it is at once obvious that the tradition has not remained stable but has changed over time. The unequivocal testimony of the texts themselves is that it is variable and dynamic not static. The degree of variation will differ according to the type of material: halakhic traditions are noticeably more carefully preserved than *aggadot*. But there are substantial variations even with regard to halakhot. Whatever the claim to pass on the tradition faithfully meant in theory, it did not mean in practice that the wording, or even, in some cases, the substance, remained unchanged. The texts are reworked, expanded, abbreviated and glossed often with little sign of inhibition.

One might be tempted to suppose that orality was the major cause of all the variation, oral texts being more obviously susceptible to change over a period of time than written texts. However, it should be borne in mind that writing was not sufficient of itself to secure the fixity of a text. There is a well attested tendency among copyists not simply to write out texts mechanically but always to 'improve' them, to add, to gloss, to change. What preserved a text—whether written or oral—against substantial change was not the medium of its transmission, but a prior attitude towards its nature and authority which dictated that it should not be changed.

4. Rabbinism, Pharisaism and Jesus

How much of this picture is relevant to the study of the New Testament, particularly the Gospels? The obvious answer would be, not much. The sources which we have drawn on are late (some very late), and to use them to illuminate the first century would be, arguably, highly anachronistic. The view that post-70 Rabbinism can be projected wholesale into the pre-70 period has been thoroughly and rightly discredited. However, anachronism is a major danger only in the context of an historicist use of the sources, that is to say, only if we are trying to reconstruct first-century Judaism in order to determine what early Christianity may, or may not, have borrowed from it. The problem of anachronism is much less acute if we are using the rabbinic sources for heuristic purposes, if we are comparing and

contrasting, or looking for models which may help us to interpret phenomena. A heuristic approach to rabbinic literature has still much to offer the student of the New Testament. To maintain a rigid historicism is inappropriate given the paucity of our sources for first-century Palestinian Judaism. We can plausibly fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge by disciplined historical imagination based on comparative models. If we are working on first-century texts (e.g. the Synoptic Gospels) and we find a significant convergence at some point between those texts and certain rabbinic data, then it is legitimate to exploit the rabbinic data to throw light on the first-century texts. We do not have first to argue that the rabbinic data can be projected back into the first century, or that the Gospels borrowed from Pharisaic Judaism; the sole function of the rabbinic data would be to act as a possible model with which to explore the Gospel phenomenon.

A brief example from the material which we have studied may clarify the approach. The rabbinic schools can be used to throw some light on the teaching tradition within the early Church. There are sufficient similarities between the rabbinic disciple-circles and the Jesus-circle to make comparison interesting and potentially fruitful. The comparison suggests at once a number of observations. First, why is there so little teaching material within the Gospels that can be carried back to Jesus himself. Even given the brevity of his ministry, the paucity of the teaching material is striking. If Jesus was a teacher, what—to put it crudely—was the syllabus within his school? Secondly, comparison with the rabbinic schools throws into sharp relief Jesus' attitude towards tradition. The Rabbis claimed to be passing on the tradition: they affirmed that they did not speak in their own name, but in the names of their masters. Jesus, by way of contrast, appears to have spoken with an independent prophetic voice and even to have claimed in certain cases to have the authority to set aside tradition. That is striking. But the issue also arises of what were the actual sources of Jesus' teaching. A Jewish teacher who simply rejects tradition would be a paradox, virtually a contradiction in terms. Comparison between the Jesus-circle and the rabbinic disciple-circles may result in stressing the differences. Comparison between rabbinic disciple-circles and the teaching situation in the post-Easter Church may lead to a stressing of the similarities. A sort of scholasticism seems to emerge within the post-Easter Church: all the New Testament writings appear to attest to an intensive scholastic activity which was

aimed (a) at interpreting the person and teaching of Jesus, and (b) at creating a distinctly Christian reading of the Hebrew Scriptures. Rabbinic models may be particularly relevant to elucidating how the early Christian groups elaborated and passed on their traditions. Comparison of the later rabbinic schools with the New Testament is, perhaps, all the more plausible because, as we saw, rabbinic schools are not, broadly speaking, a distinctively rabbinic institution: they are an example of a cultural phenomenon widespread throughout the whole of the Middle East and the Mediterranean, a phenomenon established well before the rise of Christianity.¹ This fact may go some way towards allaying the strict historicists' fears about the dangers of anachronism inherent in the comparative approach.

1. I witnessed a striking example of the continuity of Jewish educational tradition in 1988 when I sat in on a class in an Orthodox Jewish school in Gateshead. The class had begun the study of the *Humash* with Leviticus. This is, of course, good talmudic practice. But even in the talmudic period the reasons for beginning with the third book of Moses and not the first were not fully understood. R. Assi's explanation that 'the pure' (children) should begin with the laws regarding the 'pure' sacrifices carries little conviction (*Lev. R.* 7, 3). Baron more plausibly has suggested that the lay talmudic schools inherited the practice from the priestly schools of the Second Temple period. In these, naturally, great emphasis was laid on Leviticus, the 'Torah of the Priests' (*Torat Kohanim*) as the fundamental text for the training of young priests (*Social and Religious History*, II, p. 275).

JESUS AS PREACHER AND TEACHER

Rainer Riesner

'About this time there lived . . . a wise man . . . He was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews . . .'¹ This was the impression of Jesus left in the mind of a Jewish historian writing some fifty to sixty years after the events. Of course, I am citing the famous *testimonium Flavianum*, the testimony on Jesus by Flavius Josephus in the 18th book of his *Jewish Antiquities*. As we all know, since the work of Joseph Scaliger in the 16th century the authenticity of this passage is disputed. But in the last two decades there is something of a trend to accept its substantial genuineness.² In particular Geza Vermes has recently added proof that the three characterizations of Jesus as σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής and διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων (*Ant.* 18.63) are in full accordance with Josephus's style and thinking.³ The historian had in view the growth of Christianity after Easter and he modelled Jesus after a Hellenistic teacher of virtues. Nevertheless, Josephus also retained the sometimes enigmatic character of Jesus' activity. Besides his quite ambiguous characterization of Jesus as a miracle-worker Josephus underlined Jesus' effectiveness as a teacher. It seems not too risky to assume that this was quite the way in which many contemporaries could have looked at Jesus.

1. L.H. Feldman, *Josephus. IX. Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII-XIX* (LCL, 433; London: Heinemann, 1965), 49.51.

2. The most recent defence of the authenticity known to me is L.H. Feldman, 'A Selective Critical Bibliography of Josephus', in L.H. Feldman and G. Hata, *Josephus, the Bible and History* (Leiden: Brill, 1989), pp. 330-448 (430-34). Cf. also the bibliographical review of L.H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 680-84, 957-58.

3. 'The Jesus Notice of Josephus Re-Examined', *JJS* 38 (1987), pp. 2-10.

Josephus's testimony about Jesus as an able teacher is especially valuable for us because it supports an impression we otherwise get mostly from summaries in the Gospels.¹ Because these summaries seem redactional in character, we need further confirmation. Another piece of evidence in addition to the redactional statements in the Gospels and to Josephus's testimony is the designation by which Jesus was normally addressed.

1. *The Address as Teacher*

The Semitic Equivalent

In all four Gospels Jesus is addressed as διδάσκαλε, 'teacher!' As the synonymous parallelism in Mt. 23.8 shows, the vocative of διδάσκαλος translates the Hebrew/Aramaic address רַבִּי, which originally meant 'my great one'. In an explanatory statement Jn 1.38 expressly makes this identification, which is corroborated by some epigraphical evidence (CII, II, 1266, 1268/69) from pre-70 AD Jerusalem.² In the first century AD *rabbi* was not a fixed title for an academically trained and ordained scribe as it became later and has remained until the present day. The actual address, *rabbi*, was used mainly, though not exclusively, for a teacher. The Gospels reflect accurately this usage, which apparently began to change with the rabbinic reconstruction of Judaism after the end of the first century AD. *Rabbi* as a formal title with the personal suffix losing its significance is first attested in the Jewish necropolis of Beth Shearim starting in the second century AD.³ So, which term was used when Jesus was spoken of as 'the teacher' (e.g. Mk 14.14 par.) with the definite article? Since מלמד was rather used for an elementary teacher it seems after the discoveries in Qumran that here the appropriate equivalent is המורה. In Mk 12.14 (Mt. 22.16; Lk. 20.21): 'Teacher (διδάσκαλε), we know . . . that you teach truly the way of God (ἐπ' ἀληθείας τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ διδάσκεις)', we find a rather clear

1. E.g. Mk 2.13; 4.1; Mt. 7.28-29; Lk. 5.3.

2. Cf. A.F. Zimmermann, *Die urchristlichen Lehrer: Studien zum Tradentenkreis der διδάσκαλοι im frühen Urchristentum* (WUNT, II/12; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2nd edn, 1988), pp. 69-91.

3. Cf. M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim. II. The Greek Inscription* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1967), 13.172.

terminological pointer that Jesus was in the eyes of some a kind of מורה חצר, a 'true teacher'.¹

The Non-redactional Origin ²

The following observations are offered without any preconceived hypothesis of direct literary dependence of the Synoptics, since I believe that there were only literary connections at the pre-Synoptic stage.³ Luke, writing mainly for non-Jews, did not use the term ῥαββί at all. Apparently he was also careful to avoid the address διδάσκαλε in the mouth of disciples although he preserved this form of address on the lips of non-followers. The third evangelist accepted the historical information of his sources that Jesus was addressed as a Jewish teacher, whom he apparently resembled. But with the suppression or alteration of the address διδάσκαλε in the mouths of believers Luke underlined that for him Jesus was far superior to any teacher. The same tendency is found in Matthew. There is no use of διδάσκαλε on the lips of disciples, and when Judas addresses Jesus twice as ῥαββί (Mt. 26.25, 29), it is only an exception which confirms the rule: the traitor is no longer a disciple. On theological grounds the first evangelist preferred for Jesus the more distinguished κύριε as the address by followers,⁴ but Matthew preserved διδάσκαλε in the mouth of non-followers. We can detect no clear tendency in Mark. Here Jesus is addressed by both followers and outsiders as ῥαββί (or with the more dignified parallel form ῥαββουνί) and διδάσκαλε. Interestingly enough, Mark is corroborated by the last evangelist.

1. Cf. J. Morgenstern, 'Jesus the "Teacher"', in *Some Significant Antecedents of Christianity* (SPB, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1966), pp. 1-7.

2. Cf. R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer: Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* (WUNT, II/7; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 3rd edn, 1988), pp. 246-53.

3. As one-sided as it may be in itself it is challenging to read the critique of the present state of the Synoptic discussion by B. Chilton, *Profiles of a Rabbi: Synoptic Opportunities in Reading about Jesus* (BJS, 177; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989). For a not uncritical but sympathetic evaluation of the multiple-source theory see E.P. Sanders and M. Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press, 1989), pp. 51-119.

4. However, the linguistic evidence from Qumran (esp. 4QEn^a 13.13; 4QEn^b 12.17; 4QEn^c 12.24) and in the Targums shows how easy it was to switch from διδάσκαλε to κύριε in translating רבני/רבי. Cf. B.T. Viviano, 'Rabbouni and Mk 9:5', *RB* 97 (1990), pp. 207-18.

John also seems free of redactional tendencies in this respect. Apparently no evangelist had a theological interest in introducing the address of Jesus as 'teacher'. But was there perhaps a former stage in the tradition when 'teacher' was looked upon as a christological title, as Ferdinand Hahn suggested?¹

No Christological Title

The evidence does not seem very favourable for Hahn's assumption. First, Shajé J.D. Cohen, who has assembled most of the epigraphical material for *rabbi* in the first four centuries of the Christian era, shows how extremely meagre is the Jewish evidence for the form *rabbi*, outside Palestine.² Apart from the four canonical Gospels we find the term only in one other Christian source. It is a fragment of an apocryphal Gospel in a manuscript of the sixth or seventh century (PBerol. 11710) which uses forms like ῥαμβίου and ὁ ῥαμβίς.³ I completely agree with Piet W. van der Horst, commenting on this fragment: 'If one takes into account that Nathanael's address of Jesus is caused here by the fact that in the gospel of John 1:49 Nathanael calls Jesus "rabbi", one should be very careful in assuming that "rabbi" has ever been a christological title'.⁴ Indeed, the first non-hypothetical evidence for 'teacher' as a designation of dignity comes from the middle of the second century AD, when Justin Martyr as a former philosopher shows some sympathy for it.⁵ So, we can safely say that in the four Gospels the address *rabbi* with its implicit characterization of Jesus as a teacher was not introduced by secondary theological motives; it is rather Palestinian and historical. But if Jesus was seen and addressed as a teacher then we can further conclude that he also acted in some ways like a Jewish teacher.

1. *Christologische Hoheitstitel* (FRLANT, 85; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 4th edn, 1974), pp. 80-81.

2. 'Epigraphical Rabbis', *JQR* 72 (1982), pp. 1-17.

3. H. Lietzmann (ed.), 'Ein apokryphes Evangelienfragment', *ZNW* 22 (1923), pp. 153-54.

4. '“Lord, Help the Rabbi”: The Interpretation of SEG XXXI 1578b', *JJS* 38 (1987), pp. 102-106 (106).

5. Cf. F. Normann, *Christos Didaskalos: Die Vorstellung von Christus als Lehrer in der Literatur des ersten und zweiten Jahrhunderts* (MBTh, 32; Münster: Aschendorff, 1967).

2. The Synagogue-setting

The Historicity

Many Synoptic summaries mention that Jesus taught in the synagogues,¹ but we possess no Synoptic word of Jesus which speaks about his own teaching in this setting. There may be a Johannine logion on this topic which apart from some stylization by the evangelist could be genuine in substance. According to Jn 18.20 Jesus answered at the trial before Annas:

I have spoken openly to all (the world)
I always taught in a synagogue
or in the temple precincts
(where all the Jews come together).
There was nothing secret about what I said.²

One should note a kind of *parallelismus membrorum*³ and the motif of divine wisdom speaking in public to men which is attested in Synoptic sayings whose authenticity can be defended.⁴ Furthermore, except for Jn 6.59, 'Jesus and the synagogue' is not a Johannine theme. There may be added only one other argument for the historicity of Jesus' synagogue activities. Following Karl Ludwig Schmidt⁵ and Joachim Jeremias,⁶ I believe that Mk 1.21-39 is a piece of tradition which ultimately goes back to the personal recollections of Peter. The description of a Sabbath in Capernaum includes Jesus' preaching in the synagogue. That there was a special relationship between Peter and the

1. Cf. Mk 1.21; Mk 6.2 // Mt. 13.54; Mt. 4.23; 9.35; Lk. 4.15, 31; 6.6; 13.10.

2. The words and the sentence in brackets may be part of the Johannine reworking.

3. Cf. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John (XIII-XXI)* (AnBib, 29A; London: Chapman, 1972), pp. 825-26.

4. Mt. 12.42 // Lk. 11.31; Mt. 11.16-19 // Lk. 7.31-35; Mt. 11.25-26 // Lk. 10.21; Mt. 23.37-39 // Lk. 13.34-35; Mt. 11.28-30. Cf. F. Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern* (ATANT, 57; Zürich: Zwingli, 1970); Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 330-43.

5. *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu: Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch, 1919), pp. 48-67.

6. *Neutestamentliche Theologie. I. Die Verkündigung Jesu* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher, 4th edn, 1988), p. 95.

second Gospel is strongly argued by Martin Hengel.¹ If there existed a personal link between Peter and Mark then we cannot exclude *a priori* that even redactional statements in his Gospel could contain accurate information. In the case of Jesus' synagogue preaching no less a person than Rudolf Bultmann believed without further argument that the overall picture of the Synoptic Gospels is historically true.²

Forms of Synagogue Preaching and Teaching

E. Earle Ellis has pointed out that we find in the Synoptic tradition some exegetical patterns which are attested not only in the rabbinic literature but also in earlier apocalyptic writings.³ Lk. 10.25-37 (the lawyer's question and the parable of the good Samaritan) and Mt. 15.1-9 (the tradition of the elders) resemble the form of a *yelammedenu-midrash*, and there may be an example of the proem-homily in Mk 12.1-11 (the parable of the wicked husbandmen). These exegetical patterns may give us some idea how Jesus expounded the Scriptures in a synagogue setting. However, we find in the Synoptic tradition only one example of something like an abridged synagogue homily, Jesus' famous exposition of Isa. 61.1-2 in Nazareth (Lk. 4.18-27). While I tend to think on chronological grounds that the Jubilee theme is historical (cf. 11QMelch 16, 19-20), the sermon itself (Lk. 4.23-27) is composed of three independent sayings of Jesus connected by catch-words by someone who spoke Greek.⁴ In my eyes it is telling that we find in the Synoptic tradition no detailed synagogue sermons. A sermon is difficult to transmit even in an abridged form. Our lack of information in this case speaks for a careful, non-inventive process of tradition.

1. *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM Press, 1985).

2. *Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1926), pp. 43-44.

3. 'New Directions in Form Criticism', in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (WUNT, I/18; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1978), pp. 237-53 (247-52); 'Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church', in M.J. Mulder, *Mikra* (CRINT, II/1; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), pp. 691-725 (704-709).

4. Cf. C. Perrot, *La lecture de la Bible: Les anciennes lectures palestiniennes du Shabbat et des fêtes* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1973), pp. 194-204, and now B.Y. Koet, '“Today this Scripture Has Been Fulfilled in Your Ears”: Jesus' Explanation of Scripture in Luke 4.16-30', in *Five Studies on Interpretation of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (SNTA, 14; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), pp. 24-55.

The Importance of the Synagogal Background

In my opinion one cannot overstress the importance of the synagogal teaching system as a background for the formation and transmission of the Gospel tradition. The synagogues provided even in small Galilaean villages such as Nazareth a kind of popular education system.¹ Many Jewish men could read and write and were used to memorizing and expounding the Scriptures. Jesus could presuppose a knowledge of the Old Testament, a fact that explains why he seldom cites the Scriptures explicitly but only alludes to certain passages. In comparison with the academically-trained scribes in Jerusalem, most of the Galilaean followers seemed ill-educated (cf. Acts 4.13), but in comparison with other peoples of the Roman empire the level of Jewish education was rather high.² There is a very revealing illustration from archaeology. Encircled by a Roman legion and confronted with certain death, the zealots of Masada built or rebuilt a synagogue and opened a school room.³ Because obedience to God was possible only by understanding the Scriptures, even in the time of Jesus to be a pious Jew meant to learn Torah. For me, consequently, the first life-setting of the Jesus tradition was not popular folklore and romance but a teach-and-learn situation. This has been rightly stressed by Birger Gerhardsson in more than one publication.⁴

1. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 123-206; *idem*, 'Synagoge', in *Das Grosse Bibellexikon*, III (Wuppertal-Giessen: R. Brockhaus-Brunnen, 2nd edn, 1990), pp. 1507-12.

2. This becomes obvious even in the harsh criticisms of pagan anti-Semites such as Seneca (*De superstitione*, *apud* Augustine, *CivD.* 6.11) and Juvenal (*Sat.* 14.100-103). Cf. M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. I. *From Herodotus to Plutarch* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976), pp. 429-32; *idem*, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. II. *From Tacitus to Simplicius* (Jerusalem: The Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1980), pp. 102-107.

3. Cf. Y. Yadin, *Masada: Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand* (London: Weidenfeld, 1971), pp. 181-91.

4. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (ASNU, 22; Lund: Gleerup, 2nd edn, 1964); *The Origin of the Gospel Traditions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); *The Gospel Tradition* (ConBNT, 15; Lund: Gleerup, 1986).

3. *Outdoor Preaching*

Something Typical for Jesus

Preaching and teaching outside synagogues and schools was not impossible for other Jewish teachers,¹ but to do so in front of crowds was rather the exception to the rule. Both outdoor preaching and an audience of big crowds were typical for Jesus, who resembles John the Baptist in this respect. An explanation for this kind of activity is given in the poetically structured logion at Lk. 13.26-27:²

Then you will begin to say
 'We ate and drank with you,
 and you taught in our streets'.
 But he will tell you:
 'I do not know where you are from.
 Get away from me, all you evildoers!'

This logion makes at least two points. First, Jesus had a message for all the people of Israel, so he followed the example of divine wisdom (Prov. 1.20-21) and taught even in the streets. Secondly, at the time of the Last Judgment Jesus will fulfil the role of the Son of Man and his previous teaching and preaching in public will witness against his contemporaries.

The Style of Preaching

If Jesus felt his message to be eschatologically relevant, he faced also some kind of special pedagogical responsibility.³ I think that he answered to this responsibility in at least three ways.

1. Jesus made his preaching impressive. The use of parables, which in the opinion of almost all exegetes is so typical for him, could catch the attention of all kinds of hearers. Jesus underlined his teaching also through acted parables and through miracles, many of which

1. Still important is A. Büchler, 'Learning and Teaching in the Open Air in Palestine', *JQR* 4 (1913-14), pp. 485-91.

2. For the authenticity cf. I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (Exeter: Pater-noster, 1978), pp. 566-67.

3. The following thoughts are partly inspired by W. Barclay, *The Mind of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1936), pp. 96ff.

should be understood from this background.¹

2. Jesus made his teaching understandable. The use of parables and pictures from the daily experience of his audience points in this direction. This does not mean that everything Jesus uttered was plain and clear. If one assumes that the *Messiasgeheimnis* reflects in some way historical reality, then Jesus sometimes had to give veiled sayings. And of course, riddle and mystery can also catch the attention of hearers.

3. Jesus made his teaching memorizable. He wished to leave not only some diffuse emotional impression on the minds of his contemporaries, but also instruction on what it meant to say, 'The kingdom of God is near, repent!' (Mk 1.15). To give a clear idea about God's reign and humanity's answer Jesus would have formulated some short, but comprehensive summaries of his teaching. We will touch this topic below.

4. *The Sedentary Sympathizers*

The Existence of this Group

Not all of those who believed in the preaching of Jesus followed him on his trips through Palestine. Most of his sympathizers remained in their families, towns and villages. The importance of this sociological group for understanding Jesus and the Jesus tradition was stressed independently by E. Earle Ellis² and Gerd Theissen³ and is now accepted more and more.⁴ Perhaps we know a little bit about one group of such sedentary sympathizers. A small pericope from the Lukan special tradition (Lk. 10.38-42) shows us Mary, the sister of Martha, 'sitting at the feet' of Jesus like the pupil of a Torah teacher

1. Cf. B.F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1979), pp. 154-58.

2. 'New Directions in Form Criticism', pp. 240-47. The article was first published in G. Strecker (ed.), *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie [Festschrift für Hans Conzelmann]* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1975), pp. 299-315.

3. *Soziologie der Jesusbewegung: Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Urchristentums* (ThEx, 194; Munich: Kaiser, 1977), pp. 21-26.

4. Cf., e.g., D. Zeller, *Die weisheitlichen Mahnsprüche bei den Synoptikern* (FzB, 17; Würzburg: Echter, 2nd edn, 1983), p. 172; D. Kosch, *Die eschatologische Tora des Menschensohnes: Untersuchungen zur Rezeption der Stellung Jesu zur Tora in Q* (NTOA, 12; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), pp. 380-83.

(cf. Acts 22.3; *m. Ab.* 1.4) and listening to his teaching (Lk. 10.39). Combining the Lukan tradition with Jn 11.1-2 and 12.1-8, we learn that Mary and Martha lived in Bethany near the Mount of Olives and also had a brother named Lazarus. Apparently the two sisters and their brother were all unmarried, which is astonishing in a normal Jewish milieu. Some time ago Eugen Rückstuhl asked if the three might have had some Essene leanings.¹ The label 'Essene' should not mean that they were as strict and esoteric as the Qumran community. There apparently existed a wider circle of *chassidic* believers in many towns and cities of Syria-Palestine, as we learn from Philo (*Apol.* 1 [*apud* Eusebius, *praep. Ev.* 8.6]) and Josephus (*War* 2.124; cf. 2.160-61), a fact also hinted at in the *Damascus Document* (esp. CD 7.6-7; 10.21; 12.19).² There may be further literary and archaeological evidence for Rückstuhl's assumption.³

If the trio of Bethany indeed had some Essene-*chassidic* background, then we should remember that according to the *Community Rule* of Qumran all members of a *machaneh* had to be deeply instructed in the Holy Scriptures (1QS 6.6-8) and the sectarian writings (1QSa 1.4-7). In the Qumran school⁴ there was an interdependence of written and oral tradition as Professor Shemaryahu Talmon has shown.⁵ If we may be allowed for a moment to draw a very long

1. *Die Chronologie der Passion und des Letzten Mahles Jesu* (BBe, 4; Einsiedeln: Schweizer Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1963), pp. 111-12. For the Semitic flavour of Lk. 10.38-42, cf. S.T. Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1987), p. 283.

2. On this problem see now the summary of T.S. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes Illustrated by the Dead Sea Scrolls* (SNTSMS, 58; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 48-49.

3. Cf. R. Riesner, 'Das Jerusalem Essener Viertel und die Urgemeinde. Josephus, Bellum V 145; 11QMiqdasch 46,13-16; Apostelgeschichte 1-6 und die 'Archäologie', ANRW, II, 26.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter [forthcoming]). J.H. Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), pp. 54-76, gives, in my opinion, a balanced summary on Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

4. On the subject of scriptural exposition in Qumran, see now M. Fishbane, 'Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran', in Mulder, *Mikra*, pp. 339-78; on the school in Qumran, see F. Gioia, *La Comunità di Qumrân: Proposte educative* (Rome: Borla, 1979); Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 170-73.

5. 'Oral Tradition and Written Transmission, or the Heard and the Seen Word in Judaism of the Second Temple Period' (see this volume).

hypothetical line in early patristic times, we can refer to the *Traditio apostolica* of Hippolytus of Rome.¹ In the *Traditio* we meet at the turn from the second to the third century AD a very well organized catechumenate,² lasting three years (*Trad. Ap.* 17) like the novitiate in Qumran (Josephus, *War* 2.137-38; cf. 1QS 6.13-23).³ Undoubtedly, Hippolytus stood in the stream of an essenizing Jewish-Christian tradition.⁴ Apparently, the Essene teaching in the form of the 'Two Ways' had a deep influence on early Christian catechesis.⁵ With not a few scholars I consider it probable that the first part of the *Didache* with its many allusions to *verba Christi* (*Didache* 1-6) was taught verbatim to persons to be baptized.⁶

The Need of a Teaching Tradition

Most of the time the sedentary sympathizers were separated from their authoritative teacher. They could not ask questions like the disciples who followed him on the way. But how could people like

1. Concerning Hippolytus's *Refutatio* one gets the impression that Hippolytus 'ist also ein durchaus glaubwürdiger Zeuge, der trotz seines polemischen Eifers nichts "erfindet", sondern nur vorfindet' (N. Kehl, 'Bemerkungen zu einer Neuausgabe von Hippolyts "Refutatio"', *ZKT* 112 [1990], pp. 304-14 [305]). This is amply demonstrated by M. Marcovich, *Hippolytus, Refutatio omnium haresium* (PTS, 25; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986). It seems therefore justified to suppose that indeed Hippolytus in the *Traditio apostolica* reproduces tradition.

2. Cf. U. Neymeyr, *Die christlichen Lehrer im zweiten Jahrhundert: Ihre Lehrtätigkeit, ihr Selbstverständnis und ihre Geschichte* (SVigChr, 4; Leiden: Brill, 1989), pp. 36-39.

3. Cf. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes*, pp. 73-75.

4. Cf. W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), p. 280.

5. Cf. A. Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse aux deux premiers siècles* (ParMiss, 3; Paris: Cerf, 1962), pp. 15-48.

6. According to *Did.* 7.1 (against the assumption of a gloss see K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache* [KAV, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989], p. 159) it was the responsibility of the community leaders to teach the foregoing to the converts. For a verbatim teaching, cf. A. von Harnack, *Die Apostellehre und die beiden jüdischen Wege* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 2nd edn, 1896), p. 2; F.X. Funk, *Patres apostolici*, I (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2nd edn, 1901), p. xv; A. Greiff, *Das älteste Pascharituale der Kirche Did 1-10, und das Johannesevangelium* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1929), pp. 121-22. There may be added another observation, namely, the converts are in this first part directly addressed in the second person singular and with a typical address for pupils, 'my child' (*Did.* 3.1, 3, 5; 4.1).

Zacchaeus (Lk. 19.1-10) adhere to the standards of the kingdom of God in a life-setting which was in so many aspects different from a wandering band of disciples? The situation demanded a special teaching and the story about Mary and Martha may be a reflex of the circumstances. For the short time that he is present, the wandering teacher stressed the importance of learning over the obligations of hospitality (Lk. 10.42). In view of the widespread literacy in Jewish Palestine and the high-class background of some of Jesus' adherents it seems not too far fetched that, as has been suggested by some scholars, some of his teachings may have been written down even before Easter by such sedentary sympathizers.¹ Already in 1970 Colin H. Roberts wrote: 'No doubt the oral [Gospel] tradition was reinforced, as it was in Judaism, with notes'.² There is no *a priori* reason to exclude the pre-Easter situation. If indeed the soon to be published Qumran text '4Q Miqsat Ma'aseh Ha-Torah' was written by the 'Teacher of Righteousness',³ then the at least six copies of it would testify how important was the written tradition of the teaching of the founder of an apocalyptic sect. Another interesting topic would be the knowledge and use of tachygraphy in the first century AD.⁴ That the Gospels, like ancient school literature, were written to reinforce the oral teaching of the Christian communities we can clearly see in the preface of the Third Gospel (Lk. 1.1-4).⁵

1. E.g. E.J. Goodspeed, *Matthew: Apostle and Evangelist* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 16-17 and *passim*; R.H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St Matthew's Gospel* (NovTSup, 18; Leiden: Brill, 1967), pp. 181-83; Ellis, *New Directions in Form Criticism*, pp. 242-47.

2. 'Books in the Graeco-Roman World and the New Testament', in P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans, *The Cambridge History of the Bible. I. From the Beginnings to Jerome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 48-66 (55).

3. Cf. E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, 'An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran', in J. Amitai, *Biblical Archaeology Today* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), pp. 400-407. But this is doubted by L.H. Schiffman ('The New Halakhic Letter (4QMMT) and the Origin of the Dead Sea Sect', *BA* 53 [1990], pp. 64-73), who thinks that the letter predates the Teacher of Righteousness and was written by the collective leadership of the sect.

4. It is stimulating simply to read A.G. Hamman, *L'épopée du livre: Du scribe à l'imprimerie* (Paris: Perrin, 1985), pp. 13-30.

5. Cf. L. Alexander, 'Luke's Preface in the Pattern of Greek Preface-writing', *NovT* 28 (1986), pp. 48-74; *idem*, 'The Living Voice: Scepticism towards the

5. *The Inner Circle of Disciples*

The Structure of Discipleship

Martin Hengel has shown that the relationship of Jesus to his disciples was a *differentia specifica* in comparison with other contemporaneous religious schools and leaders.¹ Whereas the disciples of the proto-rabbis selected the appropriate teacher themselves, Jesus called his disciples with complete sovereignty (cf. Lk. 9.57-62 par.). For Jesus' disciples there was no end to learning under him, because they were bound to his personality (cf. Mk 10.34-38 par.). Zealot leaders also expected absolute commitment, but, unlike them, Jesus called individuals and not crowds. Nevertheless, there are some similarities with other Jewish disciples. One is expressed in the very name for Jesus' disciples, חלמיד or תלמיד, the Hebrew or Aramaic word behind the Greek μαθητής. All these expressions mean someone who learns. Interestingly, the word μαθητής in the New Testament is restricted to pupils of Jewish teachers, pre-Easter disciples of Jesus, some post-Easter believers in close contact with the pre-Easter community and in one case to pupils of Paul (Acts 9.25).

Apparently it was felt that discipleship was not simply identical with post-Easter Christianity but indicated a special relationship with the earthly Jesus. That Jesus indeed called his closest followers 'disciples' is attested in some *logia* (Mt. 10.24-25 // Lk. 6.40; Mt. 10.42; Lk. 14.26-27, 33). If Jesus in spite of all obvious differences to other Jewish disciples chose this designation, then we may infer that at least one task of his followers was also to learn.

Taught to be Sent

Unlike the Qumran-Essenes, Jesus did not wait for the coming of some chosen ones, but went to the people with his urgent message of repentance. To multiply the effect of his preaching he chose the disciples to send them to all of Israel (cf. Mt. 10.23). The disciples

Written Word in Early Christian and in Graeco-Roman Texts', in D.J.A. Clines, S.E. Fowl, and S.E. Porter (eds.), *The Bible in Three Dimensions* (JSOTSup, 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), pp. 221-47.

1. *The Charismatic Teacher and his Followers* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1981).

were not to preach on their own authority but in the name of Jesus; they were only messengers. An important part of the old Semitic customs and laws for messengers (שלוחים) was to deliver the message in the words used by the sender.¹ Not only this, but also in this sense we should understand the logion at Lk. 10.16:

Whoever listens to you,
listens to me,
and whoever rejects you,
rejects me.
But whoever rejects me,
rejects him who sent me.

The logion is modelled after the Jewish *shaliah*-institution² and cannot be explained as a secondary expansion of Mt. 10.40.³ In his magisterial commentary, Joseph A. Fitzmyer points out that for Luke this logion adds weight to the assertion (Lk. 1.4) that his Gospel gives Theophilus ἀσφάλεια on the words and deeds of Jesus.⁴

Probably the third evangelist was right. The instruction preceding the pre-Easter mission of the disciples formed the basis for the first post-Easter mission. The link between the pre-Easter missionary instruction and the materials commonly called Q may be the mission of the Jerusalem Hellenists (cf. Acts 6.1; 8.1-3; 11.19-21),⁵ which in my opinion began rather early.⁶ One should not neglect the chronological factor in this question.⁷ In the light of the bilingual situation of

1. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 468-69.

2. Cf. W. Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (THKNT, 3; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), p. 199.

3. Cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (X-XXIV)* (AnBib, 28B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 856-57.

4. *The Gospel according to Luke (X-XXIV)*, p. 857. Cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I-IX)* (AnBib, 28A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), pp. 300-301.

5. Cf. R.A. Piper, *Wisdom in the Q-Tradition: The Aphoristic Teaching of Jesus* (SNTSMS, 61; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 184-92.

6. Cf. also M. Hengel, 'Between Jesus and Paul: The "Hellenists", the "Seven" and Stephen (Acts 6.1-15; 7.54-8.3)', in *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the Earliest History of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 1-29 (27-28).

7. Cf. R. Riesner, *Die Frühzeit des Apostels Paulus: Studien zur Chronologie, Missionsstrategie und Theologie* (WUNT 1/58; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992).

Palestine¹ one can even ask with Martin Hengel if Jesus himself did not already have contacts with some of the Jewish 'Ελληνισταί of Jerusalem.² This would explain the strong position of that group already in Jerusalem immediately after the resurrection in the first two years after Easter and how a person like Barnabas, who was related to the second evangelist (Acts 12.12, 25; 15.37; cf. Col. 4.10), could become such an important apostolic figure. It is not at all impossible that in such circles Jesus did some teaching in Greek and that there existed from the time of his earthly ministry also a Greek tradition of his words. Even the strongly religious and nationalistic Zealots at Masada used Greek.³ In every case, the Jesus tradition originated in a linguistic milieu where translation from a Semitic language to Greek was easy. This should make us cautious against the hypothesis of many severe mistranslations in the Gospels. Whatever was the most widely spoken language in first-century AD Palestine,⁴ that already the pre-Easter group of disciples formed a sociological entity and the pre-Easter mission provided a *Sitz im Leben* for instruction was rightly stressed thirty years ago against Rudolf Bultmann by Heinz Schürmann.⁵

1. There is a useful summary of the recent discoveries and discussion by G.H.R. Horsley, 'The Fiction of "Jewish Greek"', in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. V. Linguistic Essays* (Macquarie University: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1989), pp. 5-40.

2. *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1989), pp. 7-18.

3. H.M. Cotton and J. Geiger, *Masada. II. The Latin and Greek Documents* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1990).

4. From the epigraphical and other archaeological evidence E.M. Meyers and J.F. Strange (*Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity* [London: SCM Press, 1981], p. 90) conclude, 'it appears that sometime during the first century BCE Aramaic and Greek changed places as Greek spread into the countryside and as knowledge of Aramaic declined among the educated and among urban dwellers. . . '

5. 'Die vorösterlichen Anfänge der Logientradition. Versuch eines formgeschichtlichen Zugangs zum Leben Jesu', in H. Ristow and K. Matthiae, *Der historische Jesus und der kerygmatische Christus* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1960), pp. 342-70. The Jewish scholar D. Flusser writes in his latest book, which appeared originally in German, 'Die Wurzeln der synoptischen Evangelien liegen in der vorösterlichen Zeit! Die Evangelien soll man nicht als eine Prägung durch das Kerygma von dem Auferstandenen verstehen' (*Das Christentum*

Chosen to be Witnesses

After the Galilaean crisis, which is testified by the undeniably authentic woes¹ against the towns Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum (Mt. 11.21-23 // Lk. 10.13-16), Jesus, like the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 8.16), withdrew to an inner circle of disciples.² The twelve were chosen to be judges of Israel (Mt. 19.28 // Lk. 22.28-30) and one may ask if this inner circle with its symbolic number was created only after the Galilaean crisis, as seems to be suggested by the fourth evangelist (Jn 6.66-70). Since the words of Jesus served as a criterion in the last judgment (Mk 8.38; cf. Mk 13.31 par.), the twelve were the appropriate *collegium* as eschatological judges. They heard and remembered the teaching and preaching of Jesus and so could witness against Israel. But this was probably not the only motif of Jesus intended for this kind of 'holy remnant'. Here the parallel to the situation of Isaiah may further be instructive. Isaiah's preaching of repentance had failed and he awaited God's judgment. But the prophet 'sealed the teaching in the disciples' (Isa. 8.16), apparently to preserve it for the time after the judgment. The institution of the Lord's Supper testifies, in my opinion, to Jesus' expectation that the disciples would have a task after the judgment worked by God through his Passion. In the esoteric group Jesus instructed the twelve about his vicarious suffering and about his future authority as the Son of Man (cf. Mk 8.31; 9.31; 10.33-34, 45). These were not topics of his initial public teaching but were part of the messianic secret.

If Jesus interpreted his Passion to the disciples, then he was persuaded that they would live for a while and could witness to others about these events. Indeed, the twelve became a living bridge between Jesus' earthly teaching and the soteriology and Christology of primitive Christianity. A student of ancient history, Edwin A. Judge, classified the early Christian communities from a sociological point of view indeed as 'scholastic sects'.³ Charles K. Barrett in a contribution to the recent *Festschrift* for Eduard Lohse also pointed out 'that the early

—eine jüdische Religion [Munich: Kösel, 1990], p. 81).

1. Cf. A. Polag, *Die Christologie der Logienquelle* (WMANT, 45; Neukirchenvluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1977), pp. 194-97.

2. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 476-87.

3. 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community', *JRH* 1 (1960-61), pp. 4-15, 57-64.

history of Christianity... manifest[s] social formations recognizable as *schools* and *conventicles*, and there is a measure of confirmation of this in the fact that the Gospels present a clear picture of Jesus as a teacher...¹ Thus, there is also some sociological justification for assuming a continuity between the pre- and the post-Easter community. One should stress this against the extreme scepticism of the classical form-critics, who claimed to use a literary-sociological method.

6. *Teaching Techniques*

A Vivid Style

In former times much damage was done to the exegesis of the Gospels by the misuse of psychology. Also in this respect the nineteenth century seems to be experiencing a resurrection in our times. Nevertheless, even with the limits of our material we can say that from the standpoint of learning-psychology Jesus was a master teacher.² Jesus could have learnt some of his rhetoric through the education in the synagogue, but he apparently had also a natural, or as he would have preferred to say, a God-given talent of speaking. He formulated strong contrasts and did not hesitate to use hyperbolic speech as 'a kind of shock treatment to help people to see the truth'.³ There are also signs of wit and humour. Jesus could cite known proverbs and common sense arguments, but also form deep riddles and sharp paradoxes. Like other Jewish teachers, he liked wordplay, but he outdid all of them in creating parables. Jesus probably never heard the Latin maxim *variatio delectat*, but he practised it.⁴ As we shall see he also knew the truth of the formula *repetitio est mater studiorum*.

1. 'School, Conventicle, and Church in the New Testament', in K. Aland and S. Meurer, *Wissenschaft und Kirche: Festschrift für Eduard Lohse* (Bielefeld: Bibelstiftung, 1989), pp. 96-110 (101).

2. The best evaluation known to me of Jesus' teaching from a psychological and pedagogical point of view is J.P. Kealy, *Jesus the Teacher* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1978). The latest publication on the topic (P. Perkins, *Jesus as Teacher* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990]) deals rather with the content than the style of Jesus' teaching.

3. Kealy, *Jesus the Teacher*, p. 41.

4. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 394-96. There is a good summary by G. Mussies, 'Jesus' Idiolect', *TD* 26 (1978), pp. 254-58.

A Memorizable Form

As hypothetical as this must remain, only if we try to retrovert the sayings of Jesus into Aramaic or sometimes also into Hebrew¹ can we evaluate fully their often poetical structure. According to my estimate, about 80 per cent of the separate saying units are formulated in some kind of *parallelismus membrorum*. To this one has to add other poetical techniques such as alliteration, assonance, rhythm and rhyme.² All these artificial forms were functional and not merely 'ornamental', as Rudolf Bultmann thought.³ The poetical structure of the words of Jesus made them, like the meshalim of the Old Testament prophets, easily memorizable and could preserve them intact. Even the form of the sayings of Jesus included in itself an imperative to remember them. It seems that the use of mnemonic devices is very seldom studied from the point of view of the psychology of the memory,⁴ but our own experience demonstrates how easy it is to learn and even to reconstruct large bodies of material, if they are in a poetical form.

1. For some of the *logia* one should consider more earnestly than usual the possibility of a Hebrew original. Cf., e.g., H.P. Rüger, 'Das Problem der Sprache Jesu', ZNW 59 (1968), pp. 111-22; *idem*, 'Die hebräische und aramäische Sprache als Hilfsmittel zum Verstehen des Neuen Testaments', in E. Lubahn and O. Radenberg, *Von Gott erkannt* (Stuttgart: Christlicher Verlagshaus, 1990), pp. 125-35; D. Flusser, 'Die literarischen Beziehungen zwischen den synoptischen Evangelien', in *Entdeckungen im Neuen Testament. I. Jesusworte und ihre Überlieferung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1987), pp. 40-67. But it seems that Hebrew was not a spoken language in the first century AD but a *lingua sacra* used in worship and scholarly discussion. Cf. H.B. Rosén, 'Die Sprachsituation im römischen Palästina', in G. Neumann and J. Untermann, *Die Sprachen im römischen Reich der Kaiserzeit* (BoJ.B 40; Cologne: Bachem, 1980), pp. 215-39.

2. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 392-404.

3. *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition* (FRLANT, 12; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd edn, 1931), p. 73.

4. Cf., however, A.D. Baddeley, *The Psychology of Memory* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), pp. 347-69. There may still be some value in the work of Père Marcel Jousse. Cf. G. Baron, *Mémoire vivante, vie et oeuvre de Marcel Jousse* (Paris: Centurion, 1981). For ancient theories of the memory see F.A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966).

Learning by Heart?

Perhaps the least persuasive point in my reconstruction of the origins of Gospel tradition was for many colleagues the assumption that Jesus encouraged his disciples to learn by heart some of his carefully formulated teaching summaries. I still believe that in New Testament research there are more improbable hypotheses than this. That rote-learning formed an important factor in the Hellenistic schools on all levels was recently admitted by Klaus Berger.¹ Learning by heart was an important part of all ancient education from the elementary to the academic niveau.² But one has to differentiate. Rhetors could memorize verbatim their own speeches (Eunapios, *Vit. Soph.* 2.8), pupils learnt by heart large parts of classical literature to have examples for imitation (Quintillian, *Inst. Orat.* 2.7.2-4), but a school tradition could also be handed down with considerable variation by altering and expanding it (Seneca, *Epist.* 33.4). Nevertheless, every scholar who tries to reconstruct to some degree the original wording of Jesus' sayings implicitly affirms that in the process of oral transmission there must have existed some learning by heart. Except for very short fragments it is impossible to remember speech not only in its content but also in its form without rote-learning. So, we have three options.

1. We can remain sceptical about knowing anything more than some main topics of Jesus' teaching.
2. We assume that words of Jesus were immediately written down; this seems possible to me only in some cases.
3. We can argue that there existed a cultivated oral tradition of the words of Jesus going back to pre-Easter times.

That at least in the post-Easter tradition of Jesus' words rote-learning played a role seems to be proven by the *paradosis* of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11.23-25) taught by Paul to the Corinthians in AD 50-51. The apostle uses *termini technici* for the delivery of a tradition³

1. 'Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament', *ANRW*, II, 25.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 1031-1432, 1831-85 (1296-99). Cf. also parts 7 and 10 of D.E. Aune, 'Prolegomena to the Study of Oral Tradition in the Hellenistic World' (see this volume).

2. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, Index.

3. The close parallel to the rabbinic terminology (*m. Ab.* 1.1) was already stressed by J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (KEK, 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 9th edn, 1910), p. 283. One can ask if an expression like *μανθάνειν τὸν*

and his version of the *verba testamenti* has close verbal agreements to the literarily independent tradition in Lk. 22.19-20.¹ But what about the pre-Easter situation?

Birger Gerhardsson made the useful distinction of aphoristic and narrative meshalim in the Jesus tradition.² I tend to think that these different speech forms both go back to two different teaching situations in the activity of Jesus. An important part of good mnemotechnic is to formulate epigrammatical statements. If the knowledge of today's theological students sometimes leaves something to be desired, we may find a clue here. They are drowned in a sea of opinions. In fear of oversimplification we often hesitate to formulate the most important facts and questions in short, clear and memorizable sentences. On the contrary, Jesus condensed the main points of his theological and ethical teaching in summaries, the aphoristic meshalim. These were uttered, not spontaneously, but consciously pre-formulated. If Jesus created a deliberate formulation and a poetical form of a teaching, then it was done not to make his hearers forget but to make them memorize. This would have been possible through the highly poetic form of most of the sayings and supported by some rote learning, either encouraged by Jesus himself or spontaneously done. Of course, not every word of Jesus could be remembered. But I consider it possible that the hearers recognized the intended summaries by their poetic form, by the stress placed on them and sometimes even by repetition throughout a longer speech. That Jesus encapsulated his main views in basic sayings, which he repeated deliberately, is stressed by experts on ancient rhetoric such as George A. Kennedy.³ The

Χριστόν (Eph. 4.20-21) means the memorization of paraenetical *verba Christi*. Cf. Turck, *Évangélisation et catéchèse*, p. 112.

1. On Paul's knowledge of the Jesus tradition, see F. Neirynck, 'Paul and the Sayings of Jesus', in A. Vanhoye, *L'apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (BETL, 73; Leuven: Peeters, 1986), pp. 265-321. But this seems far too sceptical. For another approach see P. Stuhlmacher, 'Jesustradition im Römerbrief: Eine Skizze', *ThBeir* 14 (1985), pp. 240-50; T. Holtz, 'Paul and the Oral Gospel Tradition' (see this volume) and also D. Wenham, *The Rediscovery of Jesus' Eschatological Discourse* (Gospel Perspectives, 4; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984 [cf. my review in *TZ* 46 (1990), pp. 82-83]).

2. 'The Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels', *NTS* 34 (1988), pp. 339-63.

3. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill:

unique non-responsorial *amen* may have served as another pointer to statements of special, that is, revelatory, character.¹ Of course, Jesus taught not only directly but also in discussions and conversations. In both life-settings, short summaries of his teaching could be used as starting points or conclusions.

To the narrative meshalim mainly belong parables on the 'kingdom of God'. I do not think that most of these narrative meshalim were formulated *ad hoc* to counter a particular situation. They have to do with the 'mystery of the kingdom of God' (Mk 4.11-12 par.)² and they should enter the hearer and work in him (cf. Mk 4.3-9 with Seneca, *Epist.* 38). We should free ourselves from the rationalistic heritage of Adolf Jülicher³ that the parables of Jesus conveyed only some common-sense statements. These narrative meshalim were consciously pre-meditated and intended for further meditation. This meditation would have been impossible without having the mashal as an identifiable, fixed 'oral text'. Only such a text could ensure that one meditated not one's own thoughts but 'the mystery of the kingdom'. Matthew was not completely wrong when he used a kind of *terminus technicus* for the delivery of a mashal (Mt. 13.24, 31). Jesus 'put before them a parable' (παραβολὴν παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς), an expression closely resembling Old Testament (שֵׁם לִפְנֵי [Exod. 19.7; 21.1; Deut. 4.8]) and New Testament (1 Tim. 1.18; 2 Tim. 2.2) tradition terminology.⁴

It was one of the form-critical pioneers, Martin Dibelius, who could write that in the tradition of the *Apophthegmata patrum* of the Sketic hermites (fifth century AD) we know the *Traditionsprozess*, which has 'die wesentlichsten Ähnlichkeiten mit der Überlieferungsgeschichte des Evangelienstoffes'.⁵ Indeed, there are some striking parallels between the group of Jesus' disciples and a monastic community.⁶ In

University of North Carolina, 1984), p. 68.

1. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 378-82.

2. For the authenticity and a possible life-setting, cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 477-78.

3. *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2nd edn, 1910).

4. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 369-71.

5. *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2nd edn, 1933), p. 173.

6. Cf. R. Riesner, *Formen gemeinsamen Lebens im Neuen Testament* (Theologie und Dienst, 11; Giessen: Brunnen, 2nd edn, 1984), pp. 7-25; *idem*,

every case the example of Pachomian monasticism is very interesting for the praxis of *meditatio*. In these circles we meet a great stress on memorization and astonishing examples of knowing most of the Scriptures by heart.¹ William A. Graham in his thought-provoking work about the 'oral aspects of Scripture' closes his chapter on Pachomian Scripture spirituality by saying:

These ascetics sought quite simply and explicitly to fill their minutes, hours, and days with divine speech and thought rather than their own negligent and flawed, all-too-human words and ideas, in order thereby to be transformed and, ultimately to be saved. . . . However, beyond specific verbal meaning there is simple comfort as well as efficacy merely in the repetitive act of reciting the sacred texts in chant or song, alone or collectively. Any conception of scripture that is adequate to the study of religion more generally has to be able to do justice to this kind of scriptural piety.²

The analogy is the more interesting as there seem to exist connections between the pre-Pachomian Egyptian and Syrian monasticism and a stream of an essenizing Jewish Christianity.³ Indeed the practice of *vigiliae*, *lectio continua* and *meditatio* by these early monks resembles very closely the programme of the *Community Rule* of Qumran (1QS 6.6-8):

And from the place where the ten are there shall never be absent a man who searches the law day and night, by turns, one after another. And the masters shall keep watch together a third of all the nights of the year, reading the book and searching for justice, and worshipping together [literally: saying benedictions].⁴

Jesus als Lehrer, pp. 408-22.

1. Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Historia Monachorum und Historia Lausiaca: Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Mönchtums und der frühchristlichen Begriffe Gnostiker und Pneumatiker* (FRLANT, 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1916), pp. 61-62, 162-64; T. Klauser, 'Auswendiglernen', *RAC* 1 (Stuttgart, 1950), pp. 1030-39 (1037-38).

2. *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 139-40.

3. Cf. A. Penna, 'Il reclutamento nell'essenismo e nell'antico monachesimo cristiano', *RevQ* 1 (1958-59), pp. 345-64; F. Daumas, 'La solitude des Thérapeutes et les antécédents égyptiens du monachisme chrétien', in *Philon d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1967), pp. 347-59. Other literature in K.S. Frank, *Askese und Mönchtum* (WdF, 409; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche, 1975), pp. 375-76.

4. M. Burrows, *On the Dead Sea Scrolls*, I (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), p. 378.

Otto Betz suggested that the mysterious ספר הנוסחא intended for instruction (1QSa 1.6-7) was a book for memorizing¹ since Hebrew *הנהגה* seems to be a quasi-technical term for learning by heart.² I do not claim all this as the only but at least as a possible analogy for handing down the Jesus tradition.

Flexible and Fixed 'Orality'

At this point I would like briefly to assess Werner H. Kelber's view of 'orality'. For him oral transmission means flexibility because, in contrast to written transmission, it has no separate existence apart from the speaker who creates it anew with every speech-act. Kelber summarizes his position in these words:

The formulaic quality of oral speech must not suggest mechanized learning processes, and oral clichés are not to be confused with literal consistency. Verbatim memorization as key factor in oral transmission has been abandoned by the majority of experts, who now admit the inevitability of change, flexibility, and degrees of improvisation.³

With Birger Gerhardsson⁴ I think that Kelber exaggerated the consensus of students of folklore on this point.⁵ If, for example, one looks closer at the work of the highly regarded specialist, Ruth Finnegan, it is obvious that her position is not quite as one would expect after reading Kelber.

The demonstration that rote-memory need not be important in oral poetry has sometimes misled students of the subject (myself included) to assume that it is *never* important. Parry and Lord did not go so far as this, but their works can be read as implying it.⁶

1. *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte* (WUNT, 1/6; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1960), p. 21. Cf. also CD 10.6; 13.2.

2. Josh. 1.8; Pss. 1.2; 63.7; 77.13; 143.5. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, p. 121.

3. *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 27.

4. *The Gospel Tradition*, pp. 30-39.

5. Another rather surprising overstatement is to be found in P.J. Achtemeier, 'Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity', *JBL* 109 (1990), pp. 3-27 (17), who claims that ancient texts had virtually no visual aids. One has only to look at 1QIs^a or *ṭ*⁷⁵.

6. *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge:

According to Finnegan¹ verbatim transmission was not unusual with ritualized, religious oral 'texts', especially if they fulfil three conditions:

1. The author is thought to be in some way divinely inspired.
2. The oral text is in a form, for example poetry, that can be identified as something fixed.
3. It is handed down by a group with special training for their task.

I have tried to show that the last two factors were part of the Jesus tradition even in its pre-Easter beginnings. So, one must then ask: what kind of authority as a teacher did Jesus claim and receive?

7. The Authority of the Teacher

'Not as the Scribes'

There is no word of Jesus extant where the authority of another teacher is invoked. Even the Old Testament was not his only source of authority. Jesus could base a statement solely on the argument that he himself made. Jacob Neusner stressed this important difference between Jesus and the rabbinic tradition: 'No rabbi was so important to rabbinical Judaism as Jesus was to Christianity. None prophesied as an independent authority. None left a category of "I"-sayings, for none had the prestige to do so'.² In my opinion, it would demand an exegetical *tour de force* to eliminate the emphatic 'I' from the whole Synoptic tradition. Not only after but even before Easter it was felt that Jesus claimed more authority than that of a scribe or proto-rabbi. Mk 1.22 ('They marvelled at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes') may be a redactional statement by the evangelist but it summarizes correctly what a critical analysis of the words of Jesus also shows, namely that he claimed at

Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 73.

1. *Oral Poetry*, pp. 52-87. It seems that verbatim memorizing was far more important in ancient societies with a developed system of scribes and schools (as Early Judaism was) than it is in non-literate cultures. Cf. J. Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 167-90.

2. *Development of a Legend: Studies on the Traditions Concerning Yohanan ben Zakkai* (SPB, 16; Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 190.

least prophetic authority.¹ This is clearly proven by the fact that Jesus was accused of being a false prophet in front of the Sanhedrin, as Otto Betz² and August Strobel³ have shown. Of course, all those who believed in a prophetic mission of Jesus had a deep interest in his words. Revelatory statements especially, such as the Amen-sayings, required that they be regarded and remembered as divinely inspired speech. As far as prophetic inspiration is concerned the theological question begins already with Jesus himself.

Messianic Authority

Even in his pre-Easter ministry those listening carefully to the words of Jesus and pondering them must have asked the question: is Jesus not also claiming more than prophetic authority? Just the suspicion of a messianic claim would make the words of Jesus all the more important. This was obvious to the inner circle of the disciples when at the end of his career Jesus revealed to them his messianic secret. There was then even in his earthly ministry a note of messianic authority that would have occasioned the preservation of Jesus' words and after Easter it became even more important. This motif of 'messianic authority' must be stressed against the assumption of classical form-criticism that only or primarily practical motives governed the origin and practice of the transmission of Jesus' sayings.⁴ A word of Jesus was important not only because it could have been useful but also because it was the word of the messiah approved by God himself.

8. *The Effects of Jesus as a Teacher and Preacher*

At the end one must ask the question, did Jesus succeed as a teacher?⁵ One could answer no. Jesus himself felt that his call to repentance was not really followed, either in Galilee (Mt. 11.20-24 par.) or in

1. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 276-97.

2. 'Probleme des Prozesses Jesu', *ANRW*, II, 25.1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), pp. 565-647.

3. *Die Stunde der Wahrheit: Untersuchungen zum Strafverfahren gegen Jesus* (WUNT, I/21; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1980).

4. Cf. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 35-40.

5. This question was asked in an interesting article by a professor of pedagogics, J.T. Dillon, 'The Effectiveness of Jesus as Teacher', *LV* 36 (1981), pp. 135-62.

Jerusalem (Mt. 23.37-39 par.; Lk. 19.41-44). Sometimes even the inner circle of disciples misunderstood him (e.g. Mk 8.32-33; 9.33-41 par.). At the end most if not all of the disciples left him. From this fact we can deduce that the question of belief was decided not only on the intellectual level. But was the pre-Easter teaching of Jesus totally ineffective? In my opinion, an answer lies in the fact that we possess a rather reliable tradition of the words of Jesus. This would not be the case if Jesus, the preacher and teacher, had not been able to give his words a challenging and memorizable form.

ORAL TRADITION AND THE APHORISMS OF JESUS

David E. Aune

1. Introduction

The aphorism is the single literary form most frequently attributed to Jesus in early Christian literature. According to Justin, Jesus' 'sayings [λόγοι] were short and concise [βραχεῖς δὲ καὶ σύντομοι], for he was not a sophist [σοφιστής],¹ but his word was the power of God' (*I Apol.* 14.5).² In *Gos. Thom.* 13, Jesus is compared to 'a wise man of understanding (*nourome mphilosophos mrmnhet*)', i.e., a philosopher; here the term 'philosopher' is used in a positive sense. Though originating in very different types of Christianity, these texts suggest that the attribution of aphorisms to Jesus both differentiated him from other wise men and implied that his role as a sage was at least a partially accurate description of his identity. The precise number of aphorisms in the canonical Gospels is difficult to determine, however, due to their sheer number,³ their connection with other aphorisms and

1. While Justin is probably contrasting the teaching of Jesus to that of Hellenistic rhetoricians, Josephus (*War* 1.33.2; 2.17.8) uses the term σοφισταί to refer to Jewish חכמים (see Gerhardsson 1961: 89).

2. The adjective σύντομος is used of both *chreiai* and maxims by the authors of ancient progymnasmata, e.g., Theon, *Progym.* 201.18; 201.22; 202.13 (Hock and O'Neil 1986: 82), Hermogenes, *Progym.* 6.5; 6.18 (Hock and O'Neil 1986: 174), Aphthonius, *Progym.* 3.21 (Hock and O'Neil 1986: 224).

3. Küchler (1979: 587-92) counts 108 aphorisms, though he includes eleven sayings of Jesus which should probably not be so categorized, nos. 24 (Lk. 10.42a), 26 (Lk. 12.26), 35 (Lk. 21.18), 41 (Mk 3.4 and par.), 57 (Mk 10.9 and par.), 62 (Mk 12.27a and par.), 72 (Mt. 6.25-26, 28-32 and par.), 91 (Mt. 10.29-30 and par.), 100 (Mt. 16.2-3 and par.), 101 (Mt. 18.7 and par.), 105 (Mt. 23.23b and par.). Carlston (1980: 91) counts 102 aphorisms (Mk: 32; Q: 38; Mt.: 16; Lk.: 16). Crossan (1983: viii) counts 133 aphorisms, but limits his consideration to Mk and Q

sayings in clusters and collections, their setting within more comprehensive literary forms (e.g. pronouncement stories), and the fluidity which characterizes the various literary forms found in the canonical Gospels and other ancient Jesus literature.¹ Further, lists of the aphorisms of Jesus compiled by various scholars, apart from a restricted core of sayings, exhibit numerous disagreements, suggesting that the problem of distinguishing aphorisms from various types of sayings of Jesus remains problematic.

The study of the aphorisms of Jesus in early Christian literature, particularly in light of the role which oral tradition played in the process of transmission, involves a number of very difficult problems. First, it is relatively certain that a large number of ancient Jewish popular proverbs have been transmitted as an integral part of the tradition of the sayings of Jesus. This does not necessarily mean that such proverbs were not used by the historical Jesus, though it is always possible that an indeterminate number of them have been only secondarily attributed to Jesus at various stages in the process of oral and written transmission.

Secondly, it appears that Jesus was as creative and innovative in his use of aphorisms as he was in his use of parables. He characteristically expressed moral and religious exhortation in traditional aphoristic forms. After originating with Jesus, these aphorisms quickly became part of early Christian oral and literary tradition. The more a saying of Jesus appears in various forms, contexts and versions in early Christian literature, the more certain it is that such a saying actually functioned as an aphorism in both oral and written tradition. The incorporation of aphorisms of Jesus into Christian oral tradition becomes evident in several different ways.

together with independent versions and dependent versions in Mt. and Lk. More recently, Crossan (1986: 21-130) lists 291 aphorisms with parallels, 77 of which are found only in extracanonical sources, leaving 213 aphorisms found in canonical documents.

1. Crossan (1983: 330-41) lists 133 aphorisms found in Mk and Q (with parallels in Mt. and Lk. and other canonical and extracanonical sources). A more complete inventory of 291 aphorisms is collected in Crossan 1986: 34-130, with parallels in canonical and extracanonical sources. This corpus is problematic, however. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly too large, for *all* non-narrative sayings of Jesus are included. On the other hand, there are many parallels which have not been included.

1. When aphorisms occur in a variety of settings which have no demonstrably dependent literary relationship (whether isolated or in association with other sayings).
2. When aphorisms which appear to have originally circulated independently are found in clusters or collections.
3. When aphorisms which appear to have originally circulated independently are used as climactic sayings in brief anecdotes (i.e. in pronouncement stories or *chreiai*).
4. When aphorisms which are found in association with other sayings in the Synoptic Gospels occur independently in other contexts in both canonical and extracanonical Christian literature.

Thirdly, when a single aphorism of Jesus exists in two or more parallel versions it is tempting to try to determine which version is earlier or later than the others, and which version may have given rise to the others. This quest for the most authentic extant aphorism, however, is beset by enormous methodological problems. Since orally transmitted sayings were only occasionally reduced to writing and only a fraction of such written traditions has been preserved, not even the barest bones of a representative stemma of versions of any given aphorism has survived. All that remains is a few scattered, frozen snapshots of what the aphorism looked like during just a few moments of its long, involved oral and literary history. Therefore the attempt to reconstruct the chimerical 'most original form' is extremely difficult if not impossible.

2. *The Function of Aphorisms*

The *Sitze im Leben* of the aphorisms of Jesus may be sought in the life of Jesus, in the life of the early Church and in the social setting of the various literary contexts in which they were preserved. The analysis of the aphorisms of Jesus suggests that they had several *Sitze im Leben* (synchronically and diachronically), which is largely owing to the enigmatic or ambiguous quality which they have and which makes it possible to use them in different ways and in different contexts. In recent years there has been a lively debate about whether the role of Jesus in first-century Palestinian Judaism is more appropriately understood under the category of apocalyptic preacher or wisdom teacher.

Martin Hengel (1981: 57-60) has argued that the model of apocalyptic Zealot prophecy, not the rabbinic model, best explains the distinctive features of Jesus' life and ministry.

In ancient societies, aphorisms typically functioned as vehicles for articulating and preserving traditional values and norms by expressing general and typical truths refracted through particular situations and occurrences (Williams 1981: 36, 40). The notion of a cosmic order linked to divine rule and justice is at the center of the proverbial wisdom of the Bible (Williams 1981: 17). The human problems which wisdom addresses include those of suffering and death, injustice in life, and the perils of adultery, strong drink, and the tongue (Crenshaw 1981: 18). The large number of aphorisms among the sayings of Jesus should alert us to the special functions which these aphorisms might have had both in the ministry of Jesus himself as well as in the lives of the early Christians who transmitted them in both oral and written form. While some of the aphorisms of Jesus very probably served to validate those traditional norms and values which Jesus and early Christians shared with others in the societies in which they lived (i.e. which could be expressed in terms of popular wisdom), other aphorisms gave expression to the very particular views of reality held by Jesus and early Christians (i.e. 'aphorisms' which are considered self-evidently valid only within a particular Christian community). In what might almost be considered as an addendum to the study of the parables, a number of scholars in recent years have underlined the radical features of some of the aphorisms of Jesus (Beardslee 1970: 61-73; Perrin 1976: 48-54). With specific reference to the radical features of some of the parables of Jesus, Ricoeur has described this as the pattern of orientation, disorientation and reorientation (1975: 122-28). Given the relative status and relationship between masters and slaves in the ancient world, for instance, the aphorism in Lk. 12.37 envisions a radically reversed relationship between the two:¹

1. The story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet in Jn 13.3-20 is presented as an enacted parable (cf. v. 12b), and may have been dramatized on the basis of the servant/master, emissary/sender saying in Jn 13.16 (and par.), as well as Lk. 12.37.

Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them.

Other radical sayings include the following: Lk. 9.60 // Mt. 8.22, 'Let the dead bury the dead'; Mk 8.35 and par., 'whoever would save his life will lose it'; and Mk 10.31 and par., 'But many that are first will be last and the last first' (Perrin 1976: 52). Williams (1981: 32-34, 47-63) has described biblical wisdom in terms of the two major perspectives of order (Proverbs, Sirach, *m. Ab.*) and counter-order (Qohelet and Jesus). Yet it is perilous to regard the so-called radical or counter-order perspective expressed in some of the aphorisms of Jesus as *the* index of what was characteristic of his mission and message, that is, as a criterion of historicity. Carlston (1980: 91-99) has discussed themes commonly found in ancient practical wisdom which are striking by their absence from the aphorisms of Jesus: (1) education, (2) personal character and habits, (3) friendship, (4) women and family relationships, (5) ethnic issues, (6) politics, and (7) prudence. While these themes pervade ancient practical wisdom generally, they are largely absent from the aphorisms of Jesus. The more restricted scope of wisdom *topoi* in the Jesus traditions suggests that a particular view of reality characterized the perspective of Jesus and the Christian groups which transmitted his sayings.

3. *Identifying Aphorisms*

In order to focus our discussion properly, aphorisms need to be distinguished from other types of discourse material found in Jesus literature. 'Aphorism' is one of a number of terms in English referring to popular wisdom sayings. Some common synonyms include 'proverb', 'maxim', 'gnome' and 'adage'. Each of these terms is used to refer to concise, autonomous sayings which give pithy expression to an insight about life (i.e. a general truth), the validity of which is generally recognized and approved (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1394b; Jn 4.37). For the purpose of this paper, however, it is necessary to distinguish proverbs from aphorisms, though both are only part of one end of the spectrum of figurative speech subsumed under the Hebrew rubric 'meshalim'.

We shall define the *proverb* (the Greek term is γνῶμη, while the Latin is *sententia*, both of which etymologically mean a 'way of

thinking') as an unattributed saying which gives expression to collective wisdom and for that reason is accepted as true. The *aphorism* (Greek, *χρεία*; Latin, *usus* or the loanword *chreia*),¹ on the other hand, is an expression of personal insight and vision, attributed to particular individuals (from whom they derive their authority and validity), and often reflecting specific situations (Williams 1981: 78-80; Crossan 1983: 18-25).² Since proverbs, like Greek *γνώμαι*, are unattributed sayings, there are (strictly speaking) very few 'proverbs' preserved in Jesus literature,³ for the simple reason that the focus in such literature is on what Jesus said, not on the transmission of practical wisdom for its own sake (as in the *Sentences* of Sextus).

Bultmann distinguished five types of 'Herrenworte' or 'Dominical sayings' (Bultmann 1967: 73-113): *logia* (i.e. proverbs or aphorisms), prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, legal sayings and church rules, 'I' Sayings, and similitudes and similar forms. These distinctions are made partially on the basis of form, but largely on the basis of content, and are inherently problematic because different kinds of criteria are mixed together in defining 'form'. Crossan follows a simpler taxonomy and distinguishes only between parables and aphorisms, using the latter category somewhat indiscriminately for *all* non-narrative sayings of Jesus. Crossan's two collections of aphorisms of Jesus

1. The Greek category *χρεία*, however, is a much broader and inclusive category than the English term 'aphorism'. In Robbins' (1989) collection of 1505 pronouncement stories (i.e. *chreiai*), from Jewish, early Christian, Greco-Roman and Islamic sources, he finds no less than 216 pronouncement stories in the canonical Gospels. In my view this number is far too large.

2. Attribution to specific named individuals, however, does not guarantee that these persons actually formulated such aphorisms, for Carlston (1980: 89) observes that 'proverbial sayings seem positively to engender false attributions'.

3. Jesus is made to quote popular proverbs in Lk. 4.23 and Jn 4.37. Popular aphorisms can also be found in parables which are almost certainly authentic, such as the Parable of the Pounds (Lk. 19.11-27 // Mt. 25.14-30), where the third servant tells the master 'You take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow' (Lk. 19.21b, 22b), very probably a popular aphorism. In Mt. 25.24b, 26b, the third servant is made to say 'You reap where you did not sow, and gather where you did not winnow'. In oral tradition the stable aphorism, 'You reap where you did not sow', is augmented by a different but yet parallel metaphor in Matthew and in Luke. The problem of whether or not practical wisdom sayings or proverbs were assimilated to the Jesus tradition and secondarily attributed to Jesus is a different question.

(1983 and 1986: 22-130) invite comparison and analysis.

The five categories of *Herrenworte* proposed by Bultmann have not been unanimously adopted by other form critics. Bultmann's *Herrenworte* have been variously designated as *Paradigmata* or *Paränese* (Dibelius 1971: 34-66, 234-65),¹ 'sayings of Jesus' (Taylor 1953: 88-100), and 'aphoristic meshalim' (Gerhardsson 1988: 341-42). Under all of their aliases, aphorisms are usually distinguished from 'pronouncement stories' (Taylor 1953: 63-87; Tannehill 1981: 1-13),² i.e., short narrative units, often with dialogical features, which culminate in pithy sayings,³ also called 'apophthegmata' (Bultmann 1967: 8-73) or *chreiai* (Dibelius 1971: 150-64; Mack and Robbins 1989: 1-29), or 'aphoristic narratives' (Kee 1977: 304-305). Aphorisms

1. Dibelius uses the term 'paradigma' to include both 'apophthegmata' and 'Herrenworte' in Bultmann's system of classification. Under 'Paränese', Dibelius briefly mentions six forms: maxims, metaphor, parabolic narrative, prophetic address (beatitude, woe, eschatological preaching), short commandment and extended commandment with reason provided (1971: 247). He mentions the 'gnome' only to distinguish it from a *chreia*; the former is anonymous, the latter attributed to a particular person (1971: 151).

2. The pronouncement story has been carefully defined by Robbins (1989: xi):

A pronouncement story is a brief narrative in which the climactic (and often final) element is a pronouncement either in speech or action or a combination of speech and action.

There are two main parts of a pronouncement story, the pronouncement and its setting, i.e., the response and the situation provoking the response. The pronouncement is closely associated with the main character who is the author or recipient of the speech or action. Both the setting and the pronouncement contribute to the rhetorical goal of the story.

3. Stroker (1981) emphasizes the relative paucity of pronouncement stories in the New Testament apocrypha. Yet there are twenty-two pronouncement stories in *Gos. Thom.* (Perkins 1981: 122-23), of which only six have Synoptic parallels (*Gos. Thom.* 72, 79, 99, 100, 104, 113). At least three pronouncement stories are found in *Gos. Phil.* (34, 54, 55), and the Jewish Christian apocryphal gospels apparently also contained many pronouncement stories based on the fragmentary evidence which survives (*Gos. Naz.* 2, 16; *Gos. Eb.* 5; *Gos. Heb.* 7; *Gos. Eg.* 1, 5; cf. 2 *Clem.* 12, 2; *P. Oxy.* 840.12). Bultmann provided a threefold typology of apophthegmata which consisted of *Streitgespräche* ('controversy dialogues'), *Schulgespräche* ('scholastic dialogues'), and *biographische Apophthegmata* ('biographical apophthegms'). The last category was thoroughly critiqued by Fascher (1924: 203), who suggested that *Anekdoten* ('anecdotes') was a more apt designation.

can also be distinguished from parables, or narrative meshalim (Gerhardsson 1988), which may be defined succinctly as very short stories with double meanings.¹ In practice, however, few scholars agree on the exact number of parables in the Synoptic Gospels, for the boundaries are admittedly hazy between parables and similitudes. Similitudes may be defined as descriptions of typical occurrences or activities with double meanings. While Bultmann listed some eighteen similitudes found in the Synoptic Gospels,² many of these are now

1. Gerhardsson (1988: 344 n. 1) lists 55 parables in the Synoptic Gospels (counting all Synoptic parallels separately), though the Defendant (Lk. 12.58-59) should be omitted since, like its parallel in Mt. 5.25-26 (which Gerhardsson does not list), it is neither a parable nor a narrative mashal. Crossan (1986) lists 27 parables (if the Synoptic parallels are counted separately, like Gerhardsson, he includes 38 parables) along with three from *Apoc. Jas* (6.8b; 6.11b; 8.2b) and three from *Gos. Thom.* (21, 97, 98). Gerhardsson counts the Great Feast (Mt. 22.1-10) and the Wedding Garment (Mt. 22.11-14) as two separate parables, while Crossan puts them together as a single parable (1986: 9). On the other hand, Gerhardsson considers the parable of the Burglar (Mt. 24.42-44; Lk. 12.39-40) as a single parable, while Crossan (1986: 95-96) divides it up into two aphorisms. While Gerhardsson and Crossan consider the Watchful Servants or Returning Master (Lk. 12.35-38) to be a parable (Crossan 1986: no. 17), this uniquely Lukan material seems to be a short collection of three aphorisms (cf. Bultmann 1970: 124-25). Crossan also categorizes several other sayings of Jesus as aphorisms, though Gerhardsson considers them narrative meshalim, i.e., parables. (1) Two Builders (Mt. 7.24-27; Lk. 6.47-49); (2) Playing Children (Mt. 11.16-19; Lk. 7.31-35); (3) The Servant in Authority (Mt. 24.45-51; Lk. 12.42-46); (4) The Last Judgment (Mt. 25.31-46); (5) The Friend at Midnight (Lk. 11.5-8); (6) The Defendant (Mt. 5.25-26; Lk. 12.57-59); (7) The Servant's Wages (Lk. 17.7-10). In addition, Crossan classifies the Two Debtors (Lk. 7.40-43) and the Two Sons (Mt. 21.28-32) as dialogues rather than as parables or aphorisms.

2. Bultmann (1970: 184-88) discusses eighteen similitudes: (1) Master and Servant (Lk. 17.7-10); (2) Tower Builder (Lk. 14.28-30); (3) The King at War (Lk. 14.31-33); (4) The Lost Sheep (Lk. 15.4-7 // Mt. 18.12-14); (5) The Lost Coin (Lk. 12.39-40); (6) The Thief (Lk. 12.39-40 // Mt. 24.43-44); (7) The Faithful Slave (Lk. 12.42-46 // Mt. 24.45-51); (8) Signs of the Times (Lk. 12.54-56 // Mt. 16.2-3); (9) Timely Agreement (Lk. 12.57-59 // Mt. 5.25-26); (10) Children at Play (Lk. 7.31-35 // Mt. 11.16-19); (11) The Mustard Seed (Mk 4.30-32 // Mt. 13.31-32 // Lk. 13.18-19); (12) The Leaven (Lk. 13.20-21 // Mt. 13.33); (13) The Seed Growing of Itself (Mk 4.26-29); (14) The Treasure in the Field (Mt. 13.44); (15) The Pearl of Great Price (Mt. 13.45-46); (16) The Fishnet (Mt. 13.47-50); (17) The Home Builder (Lk. 6.47-49 // Mt. 7.24-27); (18) The Fig Tree (Mk 13.28-29 // Mt. 24.32-33 // Lk. 21.29-31).

regarded as parables. Similarly, similitudes (*Gleichnisse*) tend to blend with figurative sayings (*Bildwörter*), many of which have the character of popular proverbs (Bultmann 1970: 179-89). In recent years the parables of Jesus have attracted much more scholarly attention than the similitudes and aphorisms.¹ Though Bultmann's detailed discussion of the various forms of practical wisdom on the continuum from metaphor to parable has not really been superseded so much as simply ignored, a number of important recent studies have made significant contributions to the study of the aphorisms of Jesus. Since there is a heavy concentration of practical wisdom traditions in Q, for example, studies which have focused on the non-Markan parallel traditions in Matthew and Luke have also contributed to the study of the aphorisms of Jesus (Lührmann 1969; Hoffmann 1972; Edwards 1976; Kloppenborg 1987; Piper 1989). A number of other scholars have produced significant recent studies specifically focused on the proverbial sayings of Jesus (Beardslee 1967, 1970, 1972; Zeller 1977; Carlston 1980; Williams 1981; Crossan 1983, 1986; Perdue 1986).²

It is of course well known that the Hebrew term מִשְׁל is a general term for wisdom sayings which includes a wide variety of oral and literary forms including parables (2 Sam. 12.1-6, though the term מִשְׁל is not used in the context), allegories (Ezek. 17.2-24), enigmatic oracles (Num. 23.7), taunts (Isa. 24.1), proverbs (1 Sam. 10.11-12; 24.13; Ezek. 12.22; 18.2; Jer. 31.29) (cf. Eissfeldt 1913; Scott 1989: 8-19). In the LXX, the term παραβολή is regularly used to translate מִשְׁל. In the Synoptic Gospels, the term παραβολή is occasionally used of proverbs or aphorisms (Mk 7.17; Lk. 4.23; 5.36; 6.39; 14.7). The term λόγος is also used for a proverb quoted in Jn 4.37 and in Mt. 19.11 of an aphorism used in Mt. 19.12, in the sense of 'statement, saying' (Louw and Nida 1988: I, §33.98). Old Testament form criticism distinguishes between the *proverb*, a purely observational saying derived from experience and the *wisdom saying*, or *Weisheitsspruch*, a didactic saying based on experience, or tradition which inculcates some value or lesson (Murphy 1981: 180, 184). The term 'mashal', however, is such a broad category that it is of little or no practical use

1. Even though Scott (1989: 41) argues that similitudes should be treated with parables rather than with proverbs, he does not discuss any similitudes in detail.

2. Two other important studies by Klaus Berger have focused on proverbs in the New Testament (1984a: 62-67), and in the Hellenistic world (1984b: 1049-74).

in distinguishing between the various oral and literary forms of popular wisdom.¹ Thus Gerhardsson's distinction between 'narrative meshalim' and 'aphoristic meshalim' is a departure from Israelite-Jewish literary categories, though perhaps a necessary one given the ambiguity of the native category itself.

The Greek rhetorical term *χρεία*,² or 'anecdote', is a relatively comprehensive term used by the Greeks and Romans (*chreia* is a Greek loanword in Latin), for types of discourse which New Testament scholars variously label aphorisms, pronouncement stories and stories about Jesus (Dibelius 1971: 149-64). While *chreiai* are indigenous to Hellenistic culture, they are relatively rare in Near Eastern wisdom traditions (Kloppenborg 1987: 263). In most cases the *chreiai* which are found in the Synoptic Gospels reflect the way in which Jesus traditions were transformed in a Hellenistic environment, rather than the original form of the traditions themselves (Dibelius 1971: 162-63). A *chreia* can be defined as 'a saying or action that is expressed concisely, attributed to a character, and regarded as useful for living' (Hock and O'Neil 1986: 26; cf. Robbins 1988a: 2-4). The rhetorical handbooks often divide *chreiai* into three categories, (1) sayings *chreiai*, (2) action *chreiai* and (3) mixed *chreiai* (Theon, *Progym.* 202.19-206.8 [Walz]; Hermogenes, *Progym.* 6.7-14 [Rabel]; Hock and O'Neil 1986: 27; Robbins 1988a: 4-13). Maxims (γνῶμαι/*sententiae*), on the other hand, are always sayings, never actions, and unlike *chreiai* they are never attributed to a character (Theon, *Progym.* 202.3-11; Hermogenes, *Progym.* 7.4-6).³ A reminiscence (ἀπομνημόνευμα), on the other hand, is an expanded *chreia* (Hock and O'Neil 1986: 109-10).⁴ The chief difference appears to be the intention of the author.

1. There are at least nine major literary categories of wisdom: proverb, riddle, allegory, fable, hymn, dialogue, autobiographical narrative, noun lists and didactic narrative poetry (cf. von Rad 1972: 24-50; Crenshaw 1974: 229-62; Crenshaw 1981: 36-39).

2. The term *χρεία* means 'use, advantage', so that *chreiai* are considered *χρειώδης τῷ βίῳ*, 'useful for life' (Theon, *Progym.* 202.17).

3. Since anonymity (dissociation from a specific named originator) is a primary characteristic of oral tradition (Brunvand 1972: 2; 1986: 7), only maxims technically qualify as oral tradition.

4. O'Neil's distinction between the fictional character of the *chreia* in contrast with the historical character of the reminiscence is problematic. Theon does not, according to my reading of the text, make a fictional/factual distinction between the

4. *Methodological Considerations*

A thorough investigation and analysis of the aphorisms of Jesus is an immense task unsuited to the confines of the present paper. The more limited purpose of this paper is to synthesize and critique previous research on the aphorisms of Jesus, to provide a relatively complete inventory of aphorisms, to describe the various formal features and uses of aphorisms, and to provide discussions of selected aphorisms. The most detailed study devoted exclusively to the aphorisms of Jesus is that of John Dominic Crossan (1983), a book with which I frequently find myself in agreement. It is therefore important at the outset to clarify the presuppositions and methods upon which the present study is based.

1. The problem of the authenticity of the aphorisms of Jesus is an exceedingly complex issue which cannot be discussed directly in this paper. In my view, the authenticity question, while important, is not the only issue, although it (along with source-critical questions) has dominated the study of Jesus traditions in canonical as well as extra-canonical sources, and has smothered other equally legitimate historical, literary and social concerns.¹ Julian Hill (1990), for example, has produced a fine study of four aphorisms attributed to Jesus in the *Epistula Apostolorum* in which he is primarily concerned with the literary context of each saying and the communal setting within which the entire document was situated. The comparative study of oral tradition in both ancient and modern times suggests that the *ipsissima structura*, though not the *ipsissima verba* of the aphorisms of Jesus is recoverable, at least in some cases. The notion that fixed or memorized texts can be transmitted orally with little or no change is not confirmed by the comparative study of oral tradition, nor does the study of the canonical sayings of Jesus encourage the view that his sayings were memorized (Hengel 1981: 80-81).² The reconstruction

chreia and the reminiscence. However, Saller (1980) is certainly correct that many *chreiai* or anecdotes are not historically reliable.

1. The character and adequacy of the criteria used for determining the historicity of the sayings of Jesus has been a hotly debated issue in recent years; see Boring 1988: 9-44.

2. It is important to note that *all* oral tradition, from the ephemeral family traditions which rarely survive longer than three generations, to traditions preserved

of the most original form of the aphorisms of Jesus, like the problem of the recovery of the most original form of the parables, depends on a number of assumptions about the tendencies involved in the modification of oral and written texts.¹ It is well known that while Jesus himself wrote nothing, he taught orally in Aramaic. The earliest traditions of Jesus' teachings, however, exist only in written form in Greek and sometimes even in Latin or Coptic, and are often far removed from the forms which they had when they were originally uttered. While I remain skeptical about our ability to reconstruct the teachings of Jesus from the written record, that skepticism is not because an original form did not exist (against Kelber 1983).

2. Since the aphorisms of Jesus which have been preserved in early Christian literature are not confined to the canonical Gospels, it would not be historically prudent to exclude consideration of variant traditions or parallels preserved in extracanonical Christian literature. This is particularly true since the concern in this paper is with the *oral* character of the aphorisms of Jesus and how that is reflected in the various versions of individual aphorisms scattered throughout early Christian literature. Particularly in the *Gospel of Thomas*, aphorisms are found which are arguably less developed than their parallel versions in the canonical Gospels (i.e. which do not reflect the redactional features of the Synoptic Gospels), and therefore reflect an earlier stage in the oral transmission process (e.g. *Gos. Thom.* 31 // *P. Oxy.* 1). There are also aphorisms, such as *Gos. Thom.* 82 ('He who is near me is near the fire, and he who is far from me is far from the Kingdom'), which have no parallel in canonical texts and which are arguably authentic (Davies 1983: 2).²

3. The view that sayings of Jesus were uttered by early Christian prophets and thereafter became assimilated to the sayings tradition is

with great emphasis on verbal exactness by professional memorizers, belongs to the field of folklore studies (Thomas 1989: 123-31).

1. Sanders (1969) has argued that certain tendencies assumed to have characterized the development of the Synoptic tradition (increasing length, increasing detail, diminishing Semitism, and the change of indirect into direct discourse) are not validated by a systematic survey of how early Christian authors actually worked and that therefore general dogmatic statements about the rules of how traditions are modified are never justified.

2. A recent review of research on the relationship of *Gos. Thom.* to the Synoptic Gospels is found in Fallon and Cameron 1988: 4213-24.

an attractive hypothesis but one which is incapable of demonstration given the present state of the evidence (Aune 1983: 233-45). Similarly, the related belief that the exalted Jesus spoke through evangelists and those who transmitted the Gospel traditions to them, thereby rendering the issue of the authenticity of the sayings of historical Jesus theologically superfluous (Ellis 1983: 29), is similarly undemonstrable and therefore untenable. Although the evidence that Christian prophets contributed significantly to the inventory of the sayings of Jesus is weak (Aune 1983: 233-45), that does not mean that the creation and transformation of sayings did not occur during the process of oral composition (i.e. improvisation), oral publication (i.e. performance), or oral transmission (i.e. preservation) (cf. Gentili 1984: 4). It is primarily the reconstruction of the *Sitz im Leben* for this activity that is problematic (Sanders 1985: 15-16).

4. When aphorisms occur in narrative contexts, they frequently exhibit a degree of tension, even discontinuity, with their literary matrices. They leap, as it were, from the page to the eye of the reader and *ipso facto* suggest a connection with oral or written precursors, much like such discrete folkloristic genres as riddles, proverbs and epigrams. Yet the primary setting of many aphorisms (particularly those in the canonical Gospels) is a larger discourse unit (e.g. an apophthegm or pronouncement story) within an encompassing narrative framework. To focus on the aphorisms as discrete rhetorical units within each of the Gospels is certainly a legitimate enterprise (the emphasis of Tannehill 1981: 4-5). It is equally legitimate to focus on the pre-literary history of the aphorisms of Jesus (the emphasis of Bultmann 1967, and Dibelius 1971).

5. While I accept the basic validity of the two-source theory (Mark and Q were used as sources by Matthew and Luke), rather than the priority of Matthew (Luke is dependent on Matthew, while Mark combined and conflated portions of both), it has become increasingly clear that different versions of both Mark (Mark^{Mt} and Mark^{Lk}) and Q (Q^{Mt} and Q^{Lk}) were used by Matthew and Luke (Davies and Allison 1988: 115-27; Köster 1983: 35-57), and that frequently the differences between the Matthaean and Lukan versions of the double tradition may reflect the impact of oral transmission upon the written version of Q with which each evangelist was familiar. Further, the oral and written transmission of the aphorisms of Jesus cannot be

separated as rigidly as some scholars have argued.¹ Oral tradition continued to influence written tradition until well into the second century AD. Therefore the relationship of each set of versions of particular aphorisms must be analyzed without allowing any single theory of literary dependence to exert undue influence on interpretation.

6. Despite the weaknesses of the form-critical method (emphasized by Ellis 1978: 237-53; Ellis 1983: 38-43; Güttgemanns 1979; Kelber 1983: 2-8; Stuhlmacher 1983: 2-12; Mack and Robbins 1989: 1-29), reports of its demise have been greatly exaggerated. One of the major objections to the notion of substantial changes in the tradition posited by form criticism has been the relatively short period of time during which those changes could have occurred between the cessation of the ministry of Jesus and the composition of the first types of Jesus literature. There is, however, documented evidence for the rapid development of legend in connection with historical individuals. Almost immediately after the murder of Thomas Becket on December 29, 1170, a healing cult arose which centered at Becket's tomb (Fontenrose 1966: 15-19). Thomas was canonized on February 21, 1173, and the legends which flourished included stories of how Thomas raised men from the dead, how he could strike the earth with his staff and bring forth water, and how he had foretold his own violent death.

However, from the perspective of the present study, there are two significant problematic features of form criticism: (1) the task of identifying the typical *Sitz im Leben* within which each traditional unit was transmitted (a procedure frequently based on circular argumentation), and (2) the task of categorizing and analyzing the various oral forms and genres which were vehicles for transmitting Jesus traditions.

7. While the date when a document was written does not necessarily indicate the date of its contents (relatively late documents can provide copies of relatively early sources), in general the period during which

1. Kelber (1983) sharply dichotomizes oral tradition from written text and argues for the development of an oral hermeneutic to deal with texts with oral origins. This exaggerated view is properly rejected, though for different reasons, by Farmer (1982: 165), Robbins (1985: 51-52), Gerhardsson (1986: 32-33), and Achtemeier (1990). The hazy boundary between oral and written in fifth- and fourth-century BC Athens is emphasized by Thomas 1989: 15-94.

oral tradition can be transmitted accurately is relatively short. In the specific case of Jesus traditions, documents composed after the middle of the second century would not have had access to an oral tradition which accurately reflected the same traditions a century earlier. Further, after the composition of Jesus literature, it is to be expected that such literature both exerted an influence on oral tradition and was itself influenced by oral traditions in the course of written transmission.

8. Although there is a widespread assumption that Jesus only uttered each discrete version of a particular saying once, that practice seems unlikely in view of comparative oral tradition. Acknowledgment of the possibility that some of multiple versions of particular sayings of Jesus might have originated with Jesus himself makes the quest for the earliest and most authentic form of a given aphorism even more problematic.

5. *Morphology of the Aphorism*

The aphorisms of Jesus, as defined in this paper, have a number of stable features:

1. *Specific attribution to Jesus*. This feature is important in part because it is a necessary characteristic of the *chreia* (Theon, *Progym.* 202.4-5), and excludes the consideration of allusions to the sayings of Jesus (as in James) which are not explicitly attributed to Jesus. In most instances aphorisms which are attributed to Jesus in earlier stages of transmission do not lose that attribution. On the other hand, sayings which are not initially attributed to Jesus can receive such an attribution. One example is the saying of unknown origin which Paul introduces in 1 Cor. 2.9 with the quotation formula καθὼς γέγραπται,

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor has the heart of man conceived.

This saying is explicitly attributed to Jesus in *Gos. Thom.* 17,

Jesus said, 'I shall give you what no eye has seen and what no ear has heard and what no hand has touched and what never occurred to the human mind'.

2. *The aphorism*, like the *chreia*, is subject to expansion in a variety of ways. According to the analysis of Robbins, it might appear that those who expanded the *chreiai* found in the canonical Gospels had

been trained to do so in Hellenistic schools. There are two problems with this assumption.

- a. Aphorisms of Jesus are contracted as well as expanded, and while Theon mentions the συστέλλειν of *chreiai* in passing, he does not provide any examples or discussion of such abridgement.¹
- b. The Greek mania for systematization was such that there is no conceivable way to expand a *chreia* which the rhetorical handbooks have not anticipated, i.e., any expansion whatsoever appears to agree with the prescriptions of the writers of the progymnasmata.

3. *Contexts of the aphorism.* Aphorisms occur in a variety of contexts in early Christian literature.

- a. As dialogical elements within the framework of a narrative composition, e.g., as the culminative saying in a pronouncement story or *chreia*.
- b. As individual sayings or clusters of sayings attributed to Jesus within both canonical and extracanonical Gospels, often arranged to form an argument.
- c. As individual sayings or clusters of sayings as examples or proofs within early Christian expository discourse, often with a strong paraenetic emphasis (e.g. *1 Clem.* 13.2-3).

4. *The basic function of the aphorism is didactic*, a feature which is implicit in sentences and questions, and explicit in admonitions, which can be either positive or negative.

5. *There is a marked tendency to serialize aphorisms*, and most such collections of maxims (gnomologia) or collections of *chreiai* are attributed to specific authors as a means of guaranteeing the reliability and authority of the constituent sayings (Taylor 1946: 81; Kloppenborg 1987: 292-94).

6. *Maxims were not uncommonly provided with narrative frameworks* when they were decontextualized from oral speech and

1. Robbins (1988b: 10, 15) speaks of the 'abridged' and 'expanded' form of *chreiai*. Here the term 'abridged' is inappropriate, for it presupposes that such a form was extracted from an expanded *chreia*. A more appropriate designation would be 'basic' or 'short' form of the *chreia*.

resituated in a literary text with specific scenes and appropriate casts of characters. This transition from oral to written accompanied by the addition of a narrative framework is a process which folklorists have observed in the study of proverbs (Abrahams and Babcock 1977: 414-29). The fact that the culminating sayings of many apophthegmata or pronouncement stories can stand alone (and many very probably circulated in that form) led Rudolf Bultmann to designate those apophthegmata in which the culminating saying is inseparable from the narrative framework as having an *einheitliche Konzeption* (Bultmann 1967: 49). This is further reflected in Arland Hultgren's analysis of Synoptic conflict stories under the rubrics of 'unitary conflict stories' and 'non-unitary conflict stories' (1979: 67).

6. *Types and Forms of Aphorisms*

While the form and compositional tendencies of wisdom sayings in the Old Testament have been treated in some detail (Murphy 1969: 475-83; 1981), until very recently the only detailed discussion of the form and use of the wisdom sayings of Jesus was that of Rudolf Bultmann, first published in 1921 (1970: 73-222). According to Bultmann (1970: 73-113), the basic forms of the wisdom sayings of Jesus were three:

1. Principles (declarative form):
 - a. material formulations (a thing as the subject),
 - b. personal formulations (a person as the subject),
 - c. blessings,
 - d. arguments *a minore ad maius*.
2. Exhortations (imperative form).
3. Questions.

1. *Makarisms or Beatitudes*. There are fifteen aphoristic beatitudes in the canonical Gospels,¹ and thirteen in *Gos. Thom.*² Mt. 5.3-12

1. (1) Mt. 5.3 (Lk. 6.20b); (2) 5.4 (Lk. 6.21b); (3) 5.5; (4) 5.6 (Lk. 6.21a); (5) 5.7; (6) 5.8; (7) 5.9; (8) 5.10; (9) 5.11-12 (Lk. 6.22-23); (10) 5.13, 15 (Lk. 10.23); (11) Lk. 11.28; (12) 12.37; (13) 12.23, 29 (*Gos. Thom.* 79c); (14) Jn 13.17 (Jas 1.25b); (15) Jn 20.29 (*Apoc. Jas* 3.5; 8.3). There are several instances, however, in which beatitudes are not aphorisms because they are too specific and too closely tied to their narrative context (Mt. 11.6 [Lk. 7.23]; 16.17 [addressed to Peter]; 23.39 [Lk. 13.35b]; 24.46 [Lk. 12.43]; Lk. 1.45 [addressed to Mary]; 11.27

contains a series of nine beatitudes, while Lk. 6.20-23 contains a series of four. They share four beatitudes (Mt. 5.3, 4, 6, 11-12 // Lk. 6.20-23), though Lk. 6.21b is significantly different from Mt. 5.4 in wording. Matthew has five beatitudes that are not found in Luke (Mt. 5.5, 7, 8, 9, 10). Although scholars have generally assumed that Matthew and Luke have both modified a series of beatitudes found in Q (most recently Syreeni 1987: 132-36), or that two different forms of Q were used by Matthew (QMt) and Luke (QLk) respectively (Davies and Allison 1988: 121, 434-36), it is also possible that the Sermon on the Mount was transmitted as a coherent text, apart from Q, and redacted for inclusion into Matthew (Guelich 1982: 113-15; Betz 1985: 17-36). Since a series of beatitudes constitutes a literary form (Betz 1985: 22-25), it is important to ask whether in such series individual beatitudes were collected to form a series or whether they were formulated for the express purpose of being inserted into a series.¹ The first beatitude (Mt. 5.3; Lk. 6.20) occurs independently in *Gos. Thom.* 54 and in Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3 (in a form combined with Mt. 5.11 [Lk. 6.22]). The series of three beatitudes in *Gos. Thom.* 68, 69a, 69b has parallels in (1) Mt. 5.11 // Lk. 6.22, (2) Mt. 5.10, and (3) Mt. 5.6 // Lk. 6.21. Does the evidence from *Gos. Thom.* 54 and 68, 69a, and 69b indicate that an originally independent beatitude was later inserted into a series which was used, in one form or another, by Matthew and Luke, or has this beatitude been removed from an original series of beatitudes? While it can be argued that *Gos. Thom.* 54 reflects a combination of Lk. 6.20, the omission of 'in spirit', with the phrase 'kingdom of heaven' from Mt. 5.3 (Grant and Freedman 1960: 163), it more probably reflects an independent version of that beatitude (Davies and Allison 1988: 441-42). The same is true for *Gos. Thom.* 68-69 (Grant and Freedman 1960: 173-74).

2. 'Whoever', or 'the one who' sayings. These are introduced either

[addressed to Jesus]; 14.15 [spoken by someone who ate with Jesus]).

2. Six are without parallel in the canonical Gospels (*Gos. Thom.* 7 [P. Oxy. 654.7], 18, 19, 49, 58, 103). One beatitude has a parallel in Q (*Gos. Thom.* 54 [Mt. 5.3; Lk. 6.20]), and there are also two groups of three beatitudes which have some connection with the Synoptic tradition: (1) a series of three beatitudes occur in *Gos. Thom.* 68-69 (Mt. 5.11 // Lk. 6.23; Mt. 5.10; 5.6 // Lk. 6.21), and (2) another series of three beatitudes occur in *Gos. Thom.* 79 (Lk. 11.27-28; 23.29; Jn 13.17 // Jas 1.25).

1. In the Appendix, each beatitude or makarism is listed separately.

with a relative pronoun and a finite verb or a participle (Crossan 1983: 67-75). There are a number of aphorisms of Jesus which begin with the phrase ὅς ἄν, or ὅστις ἄν, 'whoever' (in Coptic the relative substantival prefix is used, e.g., *pete-* or *petna-*, etc.) or a substantival participle. These introductory forms occur frequently in the protases of legal formulations in the Hebrew Bible (Exod. 21.12; 35.2; Lev. 15.10, 19; Num. 31.19), and are used also in meshalim (Prov. 9.4, 16; 12.1; 20.1). Many aphorisms in this form occur in Sirach (3.3, 4, 5, 6, 16, 26, 31; 4.12, 13, 15). This form occurs frequently in the sayings of Jesus, e.g., Mk 3.35 (and par. Mt. 12.50; Lk. 8.21; *Gos. Thom.* 99; 2 *Clem.* 9.11; *Gos. Eb.* 5),

Whoever (ὅς ἄν) does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Another example is found in Mk 8.35 (and par. Mt. 16.25d; Lk. 9.24; Mt. 19.39; Lk. 17.33; Jn 12.25),

For whoever (ὅς γὰρ ἑάν + subj.) would save his life will lose it; and whoever (ὅς δ' ἄν + subj.) loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

Other examples of this form occur in Mk 8.38 par.; 9.42 par. Several of these sayings also occur in the *Gospel of Thomas*.¹

3. *Conditional sayings.* These sayings (in which the condition is assumed as real or possible) are introduced with the conditional particles εἰ or ἑάν, which can be varied with the relative and participial structures mentioned above with no change in meaning in what Crossan designates 'performancial variations' (1983: 67-73). An example is found in Mk 3.24-25 (and par. Mt. 12.25; Lk. 11.17), in which the protasis is introduced with ἑάν with the subjunctive, while the apodosis has a verb in the indicative:

If (ἑάν) a kingdom is divided (μερισθῇ) against itself that kingdom cannot (δύνανται) stand. And if (ἑάν) a house is divided (μερισθῇ) against itself that house will not be able (δυνήσεται) to stand.

A number of aphorisms in the *Gospel of Thomas* have a conditional protasis in which the condition is assumed to be real. These have several forms, either introduced with the conditional particles *ešje* or *ešope* ('if'), or the conditional conjugation, i.e., the Present II with

1. *Gos. Thom.* 1, 41, 44 ('whoever' begins two clauses), 55, 56, 67, 80, 82, 94, 101, 105, 108, 110, 111b.

the particle -*šan* (e.g. *Gos. Thom.* 3 [three conditional protases]). An example is found in *Gos. Thom.* 14a,

Jesus said to them,

If you fast (*etetnšannʾnestêe*) you will beget sin for yourselves and if you pray (*etetnšaklêl*) you will be condemned and if you give (*etetnti*) alms, you will do evil to your spirits.

(see also *Gos. Thom.* 19b, 27, 29, 34, 48, 50, 70, 95).

4. *Aphorisms in synonymous couplets.* Von Rad has argued that such synonymous or antithetical couplets are 'products of an explicit literary intention', and do not characterize the form of popular proverbs (1972: 28). Unfortunately, there is no clear and convincing evidence supporting his assertion that such parallel structures *ipso facto* indicate literary activity.¹ Each aphorism must be analyzed independently to determine the characteristic features of its literary redaction. An example of such a literary formulation is found in Mt. 10.24-25a,

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher and the servant like his master.

Matthew has apparently expanded a version similar to that found in Lk. 6.40,

A disciple is not above his teacher but every one when he is fully taught will be like his teacher.

The independent character of this saying is verified by *Dial. Sav.* 53, 'the disciple resembles his teacher'. Matthew has done this by inserting a slave/master saying, similar to that found paired synonymously with a sender/emissary saying in Jn 13.16,

Truly, truly, I say to you,
a servant is not greater than his master,
nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.

Thus the tendency to expand single line aphorisms by pairing them with analogous sayings in synonymous parallelism suggests the liter-

1. It must be borne in mind that all evidence for ancient aphorisms occurs *only* in the form of written texts, which necessarily suggests some degree of stylized literary activity. The pre-literary forms of such aphorisms are of course not recoverable.

ary character of the transformation. There are many other examples of aphorisms in the Jesus tradition which consist of synonymous couplets, for example, Mk 2.21a, 22a, and par.; Mk 3.24-25 and par.; Mk 4.22 and par.; Mk 3.24-25 and par.; Lk. 6.43 // Mt. 7.17; Lk. 6.44 // Mt. 7.16; Lk. 11.23 // Mt. 12.30; Lk. 12.23 // Mt. 10.27; Mt. 10.41.

5. *Antithetical and paradoxical aphorisms* (Beardslee 1970: 66-68; Perdue 1986: 9-10). One characteristic type of *parallelismus membrorum* is the antithetical couplet, a type found frequently when two types of existence are contrasted, e.g., Prov. 10.1:

A wise son makes a glad father,
but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother.

An example of an aphorism consisting of a synonymous couplet is found in Mk 10.31 (par. Mt. 19.30; 20.16; Lk. 13.30; *P. Oxy.* 654.4.2; *Gos. Thom.* 4.2):¹

But many that are first will be last,
and the last first.

6. *The wisdom admonition*. This consists of a clause formulated with a verb in the imperative, generally followed by a clause which provides support for the first clause, that is, they focus on exhortation. Although second personal singular imperatives are usually found in admonitions in ancient proverbial literature, second person plural forms occur frequently in admonitions attributed to Jesus (Zeller 1977: 142-85). Wisdom admonitions occur with some frequency in Q: (1) Lk. 6.27-31; Mt. 5.44-45; Lk. 6.37-38; Mt. 7.1-2; (2) Lk. 11.9-10; Mt. 7.7-8; (3) Lk. 12.4; Mt. 10.28; (4) Lk. 12.22-23; Mt. 6.25; (5) Lk. 12.33b, 34; Mt. 6.19-21; (6) Lk. 12.58-59; Mt. 5.25-26; (7) Lk. 13.23-24; Mt. 7.13-14.

An interesting instance of how an aphoristic sentence could be transformed into a wisdom admonition is found in Mt. 10.27 // Lk. 12.3. Mt. 10.27 contains the following wisdom admonition:

What I tell you in the dark, utter (εἰπατε) in the light;
and what you hear whispered, proclaim (κηρύξατε) upon the housetops.

1. Other examples of antithetical aphorisms are (1) Mk 2.17 // Mt. 9.12 // Lk. 5.31; (2) Mk 7.15 // Mt. 15.11; (3) Mk 14.38 // Mt. 26.41; (4) Lk. 6.45 // Mt. 12.45; (5) Lk. 9.58 // Mt. 8.20; (6) Lk. 14.11 // Mt. 23.12; Lk. 18.14; (7) Lk. 19.26 // Mt. 25.29; (8) Mt. 22.14.

The parallel in Lk. 12.3, however, is phrased as an aphoristic sentence:

Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard (ἀκουσθήσεται) in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed (κηρυχθήσεται) upon the housetops.

Here Luke appears to have preserved the earlier form of the Q saying with the two future passive verbs, while Matthew has transformed this aphoristic sentence into a wisdom admonition (Fitzmyer 1981–85: 956). Further, the more specific application of the aphorism in Mt. 10.27 appears to be based on the more general character of the aphorism in Lk. 12.3 (Piper 1989: 57–58).

Wisdom admonitions also occur without the supporting clause (Zeller 1977: 21–22), such as the admonitions about not retaliating (Q Lk. 6.29–30; Mt. 5.39–42). Supporting or motive clauses are sometimes eliminated in transmission. The admonition found in Lk. 12.22–23 // Mt. 6.25 has a motive clause which is eliminated in *P. Oxy.* 655.1–17 and *Gos. Thom.* 36 (assuming the dependence of both on either Luke or Matthew).

7. Aphoristic sentences. These are general declarative statements in the indicative mood which encapsulate general insights. They usually consist of two lines or members in synonymous or antithetical parallelism, e.g., Prov. 17.27 (an example of synonymous parallelism):

He who restrains his words has knowledge,
and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

The Synoptic tradition contains many aphorisms of Jesus in synonymous parallelism (Mt. 10.24; Mk 4.22 // Mt. 10.26; Mt. 10.41), and antithetical parallelism (Lk. 9.58 // Mt. 8.20; Lk. 6.45 // Mt. 12.35). There are many types of aphoristic sentences.

- a. Where/there aphorisms: Lk. 12.34 // Mt. 16.21; Lk. 17.37 // Mt. 24.28; Mt. 18.20 (Goulder 1974: 78).
- b. As/so correlatives: Lk. 17.26–30 // Mt. 24.37–39; Lk. 11.30 // Mt. 12.40; Lk. 17.24 // Mt. 24.27.
- c. Future reversal sayings: Mk 8.35 // Mt. 16.25 // Lk. 9.24; Mk 10.23b, 24b // Mt. 19.23 // Lk. 18.24; *Hermas Sim.* 9.20.2b, 3b; Mk 10.25 // Mt. 19.24 // Lk. 18.25; Mk 10.31 // Mt. 19.30; Lk. 13.30; Mt. 20.16; *P. Oxy.* 654; *Gos. Thom.* 4; Lk. 14.11 // Mt. 23.12; Lk. 18.14b.

- d. Better or comparison proverbs (*Tobsprüche*) occur frequently in the Old Testament (Prov. 15.16, 17; 16.8; 17.1; 19.22; 25.24; 27.5, 10), and often in Sirach (11.3; 19.24; 20.2, 18, 25, 31; 25.16; 30.14-17; 41.15; 42.14) (cf. Zimmerli 1933: 192-94; von Rad 1972: 29; Ogden 1977: 489-505). The *Tobspruch* involves a comparison often using the formula מִן ... טוֹב ('better... than'), i.e., A is better than B (or, A with B is better than C with D).¹ Prov. 16.8 is a typical example,

Better is a little with righteousness
than great revenues with injustice.

Another example is found in Ps.-Phocylides, *Sententiae* 130:²

Better (βέλτερος) is a wise man than a strong one.

A distinctive form of the 'better saying' is found in the collection of four aphorisms in Mk 9.42-48 using the formula 'it is better... than' (καλόν ἐστιν . . . ἢ).³ Mk 9.45 (and parallels) exhibits the compositional pattern shared by each of the four aphorisms:

And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off (ἀπόκοπον);
it is better (καλόν ἐστιν) for you to enter life lame
than with two feet to be thrown into hell.

In this couplet, the first line is a condition consisting of a protasis and an apodosis containing an admonition with a second-person singular imperative, while the second line provides the basis for the action which is recommended. Another aphorism similar to the 'better saying' is found in Mk 10.25 (and par.),

It is easier (εὐκοπώτερον) for a camel to go through the eye of
a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

1. Examples cited by Carlston (1980: 100 nn. 97-98) are Prov. 15.16-17; 16.32; 27.10; Qoh. 7.1-8; 9.4, 18; Wis. 4.1; Sir. 30.14; *m. Ab.* 6.6. For a Greek example see Diogenes Laertius 4.49.

2. Cf. Ps.-Phocylides, *Sententiae* 142: 'It is better [βέλτερον] to make a gracious friend instead of an enemy'.

3. Since Hebrew and Aramaic have no special form for the comparative, καλόν used in the sense of 'better' is widely regarded as a Semitism (Black 1967: 117; Blass-Debrunner-Rehkopf 1984: §245.3).

8. *Statements of reciprocity*. The phrase 'statements of reciprocity' is more neutrally descriptive than the more pretentious term *Sätze heiligen Rechtes* (usually translated 'sentences of holy law') coined by E. Käsemann (1969) to describe a type of literary form exemplified by 1 Cor. 3.17:

If anyone destroys the temple of God,
God will destroy him.

Käsemann proposed that such pronouncements dealt with the eschatological activity of God and that their primary *Sitze im Leben* in the early Church was that of Christian prophecy. K. Berger (1970–71; 1972) described such sentences as *Sätze weisheitlicher Belehrung*, i.e., 'sentences of wisdom instruction', proposing that the form of such statements originated in sapiential exhortation and that no necessary connection existed between them and early Christian prophetic speech. These pronouncements, however, which we prefer to designate as 'statements of reciprocity', are found in both prophetic and sapiential contexts (Aune 1983: 237–40). These formulations are centrally concerned with justice, and are formulated in accordance with the principle of *ius talionis*. They implicitly reflect existence in a world divinely regulated and one in which human actions, both positive and negative, have a predictable divine response. In my view such 'statements of reciprocity' render customary distinctions between wisdom and apocalyptic as questionable. They are often in the form of conditional sentences, with the same verb appearing in both the protasis and apodosis, as in 1 Cor. 3.17. The verb in the protasis is usually in the present tense, while the verb in the apodosis is often a future passive, a circumlocution for using the name of God explicitly, as in 1 Cor. 3.17. One difficult and frequently discussed passage from Q, Lk. 12.8–9 (and par. Mt. 10.32, listed as aphorism no. 81 in the Appendix), exhibits these features and was therefore judged by Käsemann to have originated with Christian prophets rather than with Jesus.

Everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of man also will acknowledge before the angels of God. But he who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

There are about nineteen examples of such statements of reciprocity in Ignatius (Aune 1983: 294–96; Grant 1985: 65–71), many of which

have a more proverbial than prophetic character. Similar forms are found in the Gospels, though they do not often have all the generic features mentioned by Käsemann.¹ Mt. 7.1-2 contains two statements of reciprocity,

Judge not, that (ἵνα) you be not judged.
For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged,
and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

The first line is an admonition which has been expanded to include the reason, when compared to the parallel in Lk. 6.37-38, which serializes no less than five statements of reciprocity:

Judge not, and (καί)² you will not be judged;
condemn not, and you will not be condemned;
forgive and you will be forgiven;
give and it will be given to you;
good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put
into your lap.
For the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

Seven statements of reciprocity are serialized in *1 Clem.* 13.2 (perhaps derived from a written collection no longer extant or from oral tradition; cf. Köster 1957: 12-16):

Be merciful that you may obtain mercy [cf. Mt. 5.7; 18.33].
Forgive, that you may be forgiven [cf. Lk. 6.37c].
As you do, so it shall be done to you [cf. Mt. 7.12].
As you give, so shall it be given to you [cf. Lk. 6.38a].
As you judge, so shall you be judged [cf. Mt. 7.2a].
As you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you.
With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you [Mt. 7.2b].

1. The five features discussed by Käsemann (1969: 66-68) include (1) chiasmic form, (2) same verb in both parts of the pronouncement, (3) the apodosis deals with the eschatological activity of God, (4) the principle of *ius talionis* is a central feature, and (5) the protasis is introduced with the casuistic legal form 'if any one', or 'whoever', while the second part has the style of apodictic divine law.

2. καί introduces a result clause, i.e., it is a substitute for a ἵνα-clause or an infinitive; cf. H. Ljungvik, *Beiträge zur Syntax der spätgriechischen Volkssprache* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1932), pp. 82-83; M. Zerwick, *Biblical Greek* (Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963), pp. 153-54. Examples from the New Testament include Mk 4.20; 5.15; 8.24, 34; 9.39 (Elliott C. Maloney, *Semitic Interference in Marcan Syntax* [SBLDS, 51; Chicago: Scholars Press, 1981], p. 69).

Similarly, Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3 contains a series of four statements of reciprocity introduced with the quotation formula 'remembering what the Lord said when teaching' (μνημονεύοντες δὲ ὧν εἶπεν ὁ κύριος διδάσκων):¹

Judge not that (ἵνα) you be not judged [cf. Mt. 7.1].

Forgive and (καί) it shall be forgiven you [cf. Lk. 6.37c].

Be merciful that (ἵνα) you may obtain mercy [cf. Mt. 5.7; 18.33].

With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again [Mt. 7.2b].

There are at least three tendencies which appear to be at work in these passages. First, there is the tendency to serialize statements of reciprocity, a tendency already evident in Lk. 6.37-38, and particularly evident in *1 Clem.* 13.2 and Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3. Secondly, there is a tendency to create analogous formulations such as the aphorism in *1 Clem.* 13.2, 'As you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you'. Thirdly, there is a tendency to retain the essence of the aphorism while altering the verbal form, for example, the admonition 'Do not judge and you will not be judged' can be rephrased in two ways, 'Do not judge so that you will not be judged', or 'As you judge, so shall you be judged' (*1 Clem.* 13.2).

7. Compositional Tendencies in Aphorisms

Whether in oral or written transmission (or in a combination of the two), the aphorisms of Jesus have undergone modifications of various types. Crossan has categorized these changes as *performance* variations and *hermeneutical* variations.

There are, according to Crossan (1983: 42), five types of performance variations: (1) contraction, (2) expansion, (3) substitution, (4) transposition, and (5) conversion. Performance variations are primarily formal in that the basic structure and meaning of the aphorism is left essentially unchanged.

1. Contraction involves a reduction in elements in the aphorism but in such a way that the essential thrust of the aphorism is left intact. This variation is problematic, for it must be based on the assumed priority of one source to another; otherwise it could be construed as

1. Polycarp was probably familiar with *1 Clem.* 13.2 as well as with Matthew and Luke (Köster 1957: 115-18).

expansion. A possible example of contraction is found when Mk 1.15 is compared to Mt. 4.17. Mk 1.15 reads

The time is fulfilled
and the kingdom of God is at hand;
repent, and believe in the Gospel.

Mt. 4.17, if dependent on Mark, has contracted this saying,

Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

2. Expansion is the addition of an element which coheres well with the original unit. Compare Mk 9.40 (cf. Lk. 9.50), 'For he that is not against us is for us', with the Q version of the same saying in Mt. 12.30 (cf. Lk. 11.23), 'He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters'.

3. Substitution involves replacing one form of expression by another that either means very much the same thing or adapts the aphorism to its context. The Q saying in Mt. 12.30 (and par. Lk. 11.23) begins with a substantival participle, 'The one who is not (ὁ μὴ ὢν) with me is against me', while the version of the aphorism found in Mk 9.40 (cf. Lk. 9.50), begins with a relative pronoun and a finite verb, 'For the one who is not (ὃς γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν) against us is for us'. Participial, relational and conditional clauses are often substituted for each other in the aphoristic tradition (Crossan 1983: 67-73); for example, compare the relational formulation in Mk 4.9, 'He who has (ὃς ἔχει) ears to hear, let him hear', with the participial formulation in Rev. 2.7, 'The one who has (ὁ ἔχων) an ear, let him hear', with the conditional formulation in Mk 4.23, 'If any man has (εἴ τις ἔχει) ears to hear, let him hear'.

4. Transposition involves the rearrangement of elements in the aphorism. While Mk 10.31 reads 'But many that are first will be last, and the last first', a variation through transposition is found in Mt. 20.16 (reflecting Q; cf. Lk. 13.30), 'So the last will be first, and the first last'. Regardless of the literary relationship between Mark and Matthew, this aphorism has undergone transposition.

5. Conversion involves variations between negative and positive formulations of an aphorism. The golden rule in Lk. 6.31 has a positive formulation! 'And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them'. A negative formulation of the same saying occurs in *Did.* 1.2,

‘Whatever you do not want done to you, do not do to another’ (cf. *Gos. Thom.* 6).

Crossan has proposed that *hermeneutical* variations be distinguished from variations in performance, because there are instances in which parts of an aphorism provide interpretation as well as variations in the performance of the aphorism (Crossan 1983: 54-66). In *Gos. Thom.* 4.2, the ‘first/last’ aphorism (the ‘last/first’ member is missing) is interpreted by the addition ‘and they will become one and the same’:¹

For many who are first will become last
and they will become one and the same.

This is certainly a very interesting development, since the ‘first/last’ (‘last/first’) aphorism can be construed to mean that everyone is equal.

Some aphorisms are used to interpret other sayings. One example of such an aphorism is ‘The first will be last and the last first’, which was originally an independent saying (Bultmann 1970: 191).² Matthew has taken the saying over from Mark (Mk 10.31 // Mt. 19.30), and has inserted the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20.1-16), which he uses as an illustration of the ‘last/first, first/last’ aphorism, with which the parable concluded (Mt. 20.16). In Lk. 13.30 and *P. Oxy.* 654, lines 25-27 // *Gos. Thom.* 4, the aphorism is used as a generalizing conclusion to a saying of Jesus. The saying also occurs as central in Mk 9.35: ‘If any one would be first, he must be last of all and slave of all’. Then in v. 36, Jesus makes a child an example of someone who should be received in the name of Jesus (note *P. Oxy.* 654.2 // *Gos. Thom.* 4, which emphasizes how an old man will inquire of a seven-day-old child). Thus this saying is dependent in the sense

1. This saying is usually understood as referring to an eschatological reversal of stations, but perhaps refers rather to eschatological equality, as the two following texts suggest: 4 *Ezra* 5.42, ‘Just as for those who are last there is no slowness, so for those who are first there is no haste’ (Latin [ed. Klijn], ‘sicut non novissimorum tarditas, sic nec priorum velocitas’); 2 *Bar.* 30.2 (trans. Charlesworth, I, 631), ‘And the first ones will enjoy themselves and the last ones will not be sad’.

2. Yet *P. Oxy.* 654, lines 25-27, diverges from *Gos. Thom.* 4 and reads (following Fitzmyer 1974: 379),

πολλοὶ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ
οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι καὶ [ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔξουσιν].
‘Many (who are) first will be last and
the last first and they will have eternal life.’

that it never occurs in isolation, but is always used as an interpretive device with a moral or eschatological reversal of roles envisaged.

Aphoristic sentences frequently occur at the conclusion of pronouncement stories (e.g. Mk 2.13-17 and par.; 2.18-22 and par.; 2.23-28 and par.; 3.22-26 and par.; 12.13-17 and par.; Lk. 9.57-58 and par.; 9.59-60 and par.; 9.61-62; 16.14-15; 23.27-31). Bultmann (1970: 48-49, 61-62) distinguished between apophthegmata with a 'unitary conception', that is, the type in which the concluding saying was formulated as an integral part of the narrative framework in which it is found, and 'secondary formations', that is, pronouncement stories which have been generated by the aphorism with which they conclude.

There are many sections in the Synoptic Gospels in which it is difficult to determine whether or not a textual unit has been constructed out of aphorisms which at one time circulated independently, or whether the unit was originally composed of several shorter units. If the individual, isolatable units in clusters or collections of aphorisms were in fact circulated independently at a pre-literary stage, the traditional character of such units is thereby assured. R.A. Piper has analyzed seven examples of short collections of aphorisms found in the Q (or double) tradition:

1. Mt. 7.7-11; Lk. 11.9-13 (Piper 1989: 15-24);
2. Mt. 6.25-33; Lk. 12.22-31: anxiety about material goods is useless (Piper 1989: 24-36);
3. Mt. 7.1-5 (15.14; 10.24-25); Lk. 6.37-42 (Piper 1989: 36-44);
4. Mt. 7.16-20; 12.33-35; Lk. 6.43-45 (Piper 1989: 44-51);
5. Mt. 10.26-33; Lk. 12.2-9 (Piper 1989: 51-61);
6. Mt. 5.44-48; Lk. 6.27-36 (Piper 1989: 78-86);
7. Lk. 16.9-13 (Piper 1989: 86-99).

These seven aphoristic collections exhibit the following structural features:

1. Each collection begins with a wisdom admonition (Lk. 6.37 and par.; 11.9 and par.; 12.22 and par.) or a general maxim in the form of a statement (Lk. 6.43 and par.; 12.2 and par.).
2. This is followed by a general maxim with wide applicability giving the reason for the opening saying (Mt. 7.1-2 and par.; Lk. 11.10 and par.; Mt. 6.25 and par.; Lk. 6.44a).
3. Complete change of imagery in two sayings similar in theme

but different in illustration; cf. the parallel rhetorical questions in Lk. 6.39 and par.; 6.44b and par.; 11.11-12 and par.

4. Concluding unit of the collection provides the key to the meaning of the whole collection (Lk. 6.41-42 and par.; 6.43-45 and par.; Mt. 7.11 and par.; Mt. 10.31).

There are also four short collections of aphorisms in Mark.

1. 2.19-22 (four aphoristic units).
2. 4.21-25 (five aphoristic units; cf. Crossan 1983: 165-66).
3. 8.34b-38 (five aphoristic units; cf. Piper 1989: 197-202), or 8.34b-9.1 (six aphoristic units; cf. Crossan 1983: 166-67).
4. 9.42-50 (seven aphoristic units).

8. Conclusions

1. Despite the often facile way in which New Testament scholars speak of the oral transmission of the sayings attributed to Jesus, this overview of one category of such sayings, the aphorism, suggests that the interplay between oral and written transmission of the Jesus tradition was an extraordinarily complex phenomenon which will probably never be satisfactorily unraveled. The reason for this pessimistic judgment is based primarily on the fact that, as in the case of the manuscript tradition of the Greek New Testament, most of the evidence for the transmission of the aphorisms no longer exists. Further, the notion that oral tradition is flexible and written tradition is fixed (or even that oral tradition can be fixed and written transmission even more fixed) is a thoroughly modern assumption which is not supported by the evidence. The analysis of the written evidence for the aphorisms of Jesus (both within this paper and particularly in Appendix A) suggests that it was as flexible and variable as one might suppose oral tradition to be. In early Christianity, it is probable that texts became relatively fixed and unchanging only by attributing sacred status to them, and by the increasing role which Christian scholars educated in Greco-Roman schools played in the writing and transmission of the intellectual tradition of early Christianity.

2. While it may be difficult to argue that this or that particular saying is 'historical' or 'authentic', i.e., essentially represents an aphorism of the historical Jesus, the sheer number of such aphorisms together with their persistent attribution to Jesus makes it certain that

Jesus regarded himself and was regarded by his followers and later Christian generations as a Jewish sage and teacher of wisdom. Certainly the tenacity with which aphorisms cling to their attribution to Jesus is an important theological and sociological feature of early Christianity, suggestive not only of the role played by the historical Jesus, but also of the role which later Christianity wished to have Jesus play. Even in the case of sayings of the historical Jesus judged to be 'authentic' by critical scholarship, what is preserved accurately is the *ipsissima structura* of such aphorisms, not the *ipsissima verba*.

3. The aphorisms attributed to Jesus do not only provide self-evident validation of the traditional norms and values which characterized late Second Temple Judaism, but are also (and perhaps more importantly) an index to the very particular outlook which characterized early Christianity and very probably Jesus himself. Aphorisms have a degree of ambiguity which makes it possible to use them in various contexts with various meanings, though this character does not make it easy to determine the 'original' meaning which the 'earliest form' of the aphorism had.

4. When an aphorism exists in more than one version, scholarly opinion usually disagrees on how the history of that aphorism should be reconstructed. Given Sanders's eloquent refutation of the generalized tendencies of the transformation of Jesus traditions (1969), scholars must focus on a convincing analysis of each aphorism in all of its extant versions before drawing any general conclusions about the oral and literary history of the aphorisms of Jesus. Since New Testament scholars do not all agree on the proper solution to the Synoptic problem, it is hardly likely that they will agree on whether Version 1 of Aphorism A is dependent on Version 2 or whether the reverse is true. Human ingenuity being what it is, the evidence is infinitely manipulable.

Appendix

INVENTORY OF APHORISMS OF JESUS

The only lengthy study devoted to the general subject of the aphorisms of Jesus is John Dominic Crossan's book, *In Fragments: The Aphorisms of Jesus* (1983). He restricts his study to the 133 aphorisms in Mark and Q and those dependent on them in Matthew, Luke and extracanonical Jesus literature.¹ Crossan focuses on the task of reconstructing the earliest recoverable versions of the aphorisms of Jesus by identifying the various ways in which they were altered in the transmission process, and the way in which they were transformed from single items to larger clusters and collections. He discusses in detail many, though not all, of the 133 aphorisms. He largely ignores previous form-critical research on the sayings of Jesus (the issue of the typical *Sitz im Leben* in which aphorisms were used does not strike him as particularly useful), he is not particularly concerned with questions of authenticity, and he does not really deal with the relationship between aphorisms and other types of sayings. He does suggest that aphorisms could be expanded into pronouncement stories. Although he begins by distinguishing between proverbs and aphorisms, that distinction is not carried out consistently throughout the rest of the book. In a recent and very useful handbook, *Sayings Parallels: A Workbook for the Jesus Tradition* (1986), Crossan has provided a collection of no less than 291 aphorisms of Jesus printed with parallel versions found in both canonical and extracanonical Christian literature.² Since the same aphorism can occur in different genres, that is, as an independent aphorism, as an answer in a dialogue and as a conclusion to a story, Crossan indicates the presence of aphorisms in other genres with an asterisk. Since Crossan includes all non-narrative sayings of Jesus which he does not classify as parables or dialogues under the rubric 'aphorism', he includes many sayings which should not be classified as aphorisms. Crossan 1986, no. 78 is the aphorism 'Against anxieties' (Mt. 6.25-33 // Lk. 12.22-31; *P. Oxy.* 655.36; *Gos. Thom.* 36), which is far too lengthy and complex to fit any definition of 'aphorism'. In Crossan 1983: 338, this passage from Q is divided into three aphorisms, nos. 93, 94 and 95. Further, some of the aphorisms listed in Crossan 1983 are categorized as 'dialogues' in Crossan 1986.³ Many sayings of Jesus are incorrectly categorized

1. Only nine of 133 aphorisms are attested only in a single source: Mk 7.15; 9.49; Q^{Mt} 10.23; Q^{Lk} 6.24, 25a, 25b, 26; 12.32, 48b.

2. Crossan (1986: xv) distinguishes 33 'narrative parables' from 'aphoristic parables' (e.g. Mk 3.24-25), and 'extended parables' (e.g. Mt. 7.24-27). He considers aphoristic and extended parables as types of aphorisms.

3. Crossan 1983: no. 20 = Crossan 1986: no. 350; Crossan 1983: no. 21 = Crossan 1986: no. 352; Crossan 1983: no. 22 = Crossan 1986: no. 328; Crossan 1983: no. 24 = Crossan 1986: no. 359; Crossan 1983: no. 54 = Crossan 1986: no. 364; Crossan 1983: no. 104 = Crossan 1986: no. 335.

as aphorisms, such as Mk 1.15 and parallels:

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand;
repent and believe in the Gospel.

Or, in its twice repeated Matthaean form (3.2; 4.17):

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The following inventory of 167 aphorisms of Jesus is arranged in the following order: (1) triple tradition, i.e., Mark and parallels in Matthew and Luke; (2) the double tradition, i.e., Q parallels in Luke and Matthew; (3) Matthew; (4) Luke; (5) John; (6) *Gospel of Thomas*.

Aphorisms marked with an asterisk (*) are those which Bultmann (1970: 107-108) judged to be secular meshalim which later entered the Jesus tradition.¹ Statistics on the number of aphorisms found in various sources show that they are divided as follows:

1. Mark and parallels, 44.
2. Double tradition, 49.
3. Matthew, 32.
4. Luke, 22.
5. John, 8.
6. *Gospel of Thomas*, 4.
7. Other, 8.

1. The physician and the sick (Mk 2.17a; Mt. 9.12; Lk. 5.31; *P. Oxy.* 1224.1). Crossan 1986: no. 423 (as conclusion of story). Küchler 1979: 588. Metaphorical saying interpreted in Mk 2.17b; Mt. 9.13b; Lk. 5.32. Separately attested in *P. Oxy.* 1224.1. Antithetical parallelism. Aphoristic sentence.

2. Righteous and sinners (Mk 2.17b; Mt. 9.13b; Lk. 5.32; 2 *Clem.* 2.4; *Barn.* 5.9b; Justin, *1 Apol.* 15.8; Ps.-Justin, *De resurr.* 7; cf. 1 Tim. 1.15). Crossan 1986: no. 97. 'I'-saying used to interpret Physician and Sick metaphor in Mk 2.17a and par. Separately attested in 2 *Clem.* 2.4b; *Barn.* 5.9b. Aphoristic sentence. No metaphorical features; functions to interpret Mk 2.17a and par., and may therefore have circulated independently of the pronouncement story with which it is now associated (Bultmann 1970: 16), as it is found in 2 *Clem.* 2.4 and Justin, *1 Apol.* 15.8 (*Barn.* 5.9 appears to be a retelling of Mk 2.15-17 entirely in the third person). The phrase 'to repentance' (εἰς μετανοίαν) is added in Lk. 5.32, Justin, *1 Apol.* 15.8 and Ps.-Justin, *De resurr.* 7. The saying is introduced in 2 *Clem.* 2.4 with γραφή λέγει, which suggests dependence on a written text (Köster 1957: 71), rather than dependence on oral tradition (Donfried 1974: 59-60).

3. Presence of the bridegroom (Mk 2.19a // Mt. 9.15a // Lk. 5.34; *Gos. Thom.*

1. While Bultmann thinks it quite possible that Jesus modified popular proverbs, he also thinks that the tradition would have preserved such occasional use of popular gnomic discourse by Jesus (1970: 105-106).

104.2). Crossan 1986: no. 331 (part of a dialogue in Mk 2.18-20 and par.). Küchler 1979: 588. Mk 2.19b (found alone in a different version in *Gos. Thom.* 104.2) was probably missing from version of Mark used by Matthew and Luke. Aphoristic rhetorical question.

4. Absence of the bridegroom (Mk 2.20 // Mt. 9.15b // Lk. 5.35; *Gos. Thom.* 104.2). Crossan 1986: no. 331 (part of a dialogue in Mk 2.18-20 and par.).

*5. New patches on old garments (Mk 2.21; Mt. 9.16; Lk. 5.36; *Gos. Thom.* 47.4a). Crossan 1986: no. 98 (with Mk 2.22 and par.). Küchler 1979: 588 (includes Mk 2.22 and par.). Two lines in present tense, supporting clause introduced by δέ (Mark, Luke) or γάρ (Matthew). Aphoristic sentence.

6. New wine in old wineskins (Mk 2.22; Mt. 9.17; Lk. 5.37-38; *Gos. Thom.* 47.4a). Crossan 1986 (with Mk 2.21 and par.). Küchler 1979: 588 (includes Mk 2.21 and par.). *Gos. Thom.* reverses order of similitudes and adds (secondary addition) 'nor is old wine put into new wineskins, lest it spoil it'. Aphoristic sentence.

7. Sabbath is for people (Mk 2.27). Crossan 1986: no. 135 (combined with Mk 2.28). Mk 2.27 perhaps absent from version of Mark used by Matthew and Luke. Aphoristic sentence.

8. Lord of the Sabbath (Mk 2.28 // Mt. 12.8 // Lk. 6.5). Crossan 1986: no. 135.

9. The divided kingdom (Mk 3.24 // Mt. 12.25a // Lk. 11.17a). Crossan 1986: no. 424 (part of climax of pronouncement story, not separately as an aphorism). Küchler 1979: 588 (includes Mk 3.23b-26 and par.). Mk 3.23 contains the explanation ('How can Satan cast out Satan?') used as a preface to the metaphors of the divided kingdom and the divided house.

10. The divided house (Mk 3.25 // Mt. 12.25b // Lk. 11.17b). Crossan 1986: no. 424 (part of climax of pronouncement story). Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 95), includes Lk. 11.18a (which appears to be a hermeneutical addition), 'And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?'

11. Entering a strong man's house (Mk 3.27; Mt. 12.29; *Gos. Thom.* 35; cf. Lk. 8.21-22). Crossan 1986: no. 137. Küchler 1979: 588. Aphoristic sentence.

12. Doing God's will (Mk 3.35 // Mt. 12.50 // Lk. 8.21; *Gos. Thom.* 99; 2 *Clem.* 9.11; *Gos. Eb.* 5). Crossan 1986: no. 436 (concluding saying in story, i.e., a pronouncement story; cf. Robbins 1989: 82). The problem is whether this saying originally circulated separately and perhaps was the basis for creating a pronouncement story; cf. J. Lambrecht, 'The Relatives of Jesus in Mark', *NovT* 16 (1974), pp. 250-51. *Gos. Thom.* 99 adds a line which functions as a hermeneutical addition, 'They are the ones who will enter the kingdom of my Father'. (Note the Matthaean addition of 'Thy will be done' to the line 'Thy kingdom come' in the Lord's Prayer, Mt. 6.9-13 // Lk. 11.2-4).

*13. Hidden and revealed (Mk 4.22 // Lk. 8.17; Mt. 10.26b; Lk. 12.2; *Gos. Thom.* 5.2 // *P. Oxy.* 654 5.2; *Gos. Thom.* 6.4 // *P. Oxy.* 654 6.4). Crossan 1986: no. 115. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 89). Synonymous couplet. Independent circulation suggested by inclusion in various contexts (Mt. 10.26b; Lk. 12.2; *Gos. Thom.* 5, 6).

14. What you give is what you get (Mk 4.24b // Mt. 7.2b // Lk. 6.38b; *1 Clem.* 13.2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3). Crossan 1986: no. 82. Küchler 1979: 589 (no. 46), 590 (no. 75). Second line found in Mk 4.24, 'and still more will be given to you'. Possibly missing from version of Mark used by Matthew and Luke (also missing from *1 Clem.* 13.2 and Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3).

*15. The haves and have nots (Mk 4.25 // Mt. 13.12 // Lk. 8.18b // *Gos. Thom.* 41; Lk. 19.26 // Mt. 25.29). Crossan 1986: no. 144. Küchler 1979: 589. Independent circulation shown by attestation in at least two versions, Q and Mark. Antithetical couplet. Aphoristic sentence.

*16. Prophet not honored (Mk 6.4; Mt. 13.57; Lk. 4.24; Jn 4.44; *P. Oxy.* 1; *Gos. Thom.* 31). Crossan 1986: no. 146. Küchler 1979: 589. Part of *chreia* in Mk 6.1-6.

17. Defilement comes from inside (Mk 7.15 // Mt. 15.11; *Gos. Thom.* 14.3). Crossan 1986: no. 147. Küchler 1979: 589. Antithetical couplet. Called *παράβολή* in Mk 7.17. Aphoristic sentence.

18. Do not give the children's bread to dogs (Mk 7.27 // Mt. 15.26). Crossan 1986: no. 440 (part of miracle story). Küchler 1979: 589.

19. Taking up the cross (Mk 8.34 // Mt. 16.24 // Lk. 9.23; Lk. 14.27 // Mt. 10.38; *Gos. Thom.* 55). Crossan 1986: no. 122. In form this is an 'I'-saying.

20. Gaining and losing life (Mk 8.35 // Mt. 16.25 // Lk. 9.24; Mt. 10.39; Lk. 17.33; Jn 12.25). Crossan 1986: no. 123. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 92), 589. The phrase 'and the gospel's' (Mk 8.35) probably not in the version of Mark used by Matthew and Luke. Specific reference to Jesus ('for my sake') unlike general wisdom admonitions.

*21. Gaining the world but losing one's life (Mk 8.36 // Mt. 16.26a // Lk. 9.25; 2 *Clem.* 6.2). Crossan 1986: no. 155. Küchler 1979: 589. Rhetorical question.

*22. The price of life (Mk 8.37 // Mt. 16.26b). Crossan 1986: no. 156. Rhetorical question. Possibly missing from version of Mark used by Luke.

23. Ashamed of Jesus (Version 1, Mk 8.38 // Lk. 9.26; Version 2, Lk. 12.8-9 // Mt. 10.32-33; 2 *Clem.* 3.2; cf. 2 Tim. 2.12 [not attributed to Jesus, but is linked with three other conditional sayings which together is called a *πιστὸς ὁ λόγος*, 'the saying is reliable', it functions as a self-evidently true aphorism]; Rev. 3.5). Crossan 1986: no. 119; 1983, no. 89. In form, this is an 'I'-saying. The Oxford Committee (1905: 130) thought that *1 Clem.* 13.2 was dependent on an oral or written source

different from the canonical Gospels, while Köster (1957: 72) regards *1 Clem.* 13.2 as dependent on Matthew.

24. First must be last (Mk 9.35). Crossan 1986: no. 172 (listed as parallel to Mk 10.43-44 and par.). Küchler 1979: 589 (no. 53). Wisdom admonition without supporting clause, if future indicative understood as imperative (Zeller 1977: 122).

*25. For and against (Mk 9.40; Lk. 9.50b; Lk. 11.23 // Mt. 12.30). Crossan 1986: no. 138. Küchler 1979: 589 (no. 42), 591 (no. 95). Aphoristic sentence.

26. Offending little ones (Mk 9.42 // Mt. 18.6 // Lk. 17.2; *1 Clem.* 46.8b). Crossan 1986: no. 160. A *Tobsspruch* in which the formulaic καλόν ἐστίν of Mk 9.42 is represented by συμφέρεi in Mt. 18.6 and λυσιτελεῖ in Lk. 17.2.

27. An offending hand (Mk 9.43; Mt. 18.8). Crossan 1986: no. 57 (includes Mk 9.43, 45, 47 and par.). Küchler 1979: 589 (includes Mk 9.43-47 and par.). Second person singular imperative. Wisdom admonition with supporting clause.

28. An offending foot (Mk 9.45; Mt. 18.8). Crossan 1986: no. 57 (includes Mk 9.43, 45, 47 and par.). Küchler 1979: 589 (includes Mk 9.43-47 and par.). Second person singular imperative. Wisdom admonition with supporting clause.

29. An offending eye (Mk 9.47-48; Mt. 18.9). Crossan 1986: no. 57 (includes Mk 9.43, 45, 47; Mt. 18.8-9). Küchler 1979: 589 (includes Mk 9.43-47 and par.). Second person singular imperative. Mk 9.48 missing from Matthew, possibly absent from version of Mark used by Matthew. Wisdom admonition with supporting clause.

30. Salted with fire (Mk 9.49). Crossan 1986: no. 212. Küchler 1979: 589.

*31. Salt is good (Mk 9.50a // Mt. 5.13 // Lk. 14.34-35). Crossan 1986: no. 44. Küchler 1979: 589. Rhetorical question; aphoristic question. The Q version appears to be an expansion of the version found in Mark. Similitude or parable (Fitzmyer 1981-85: 1067).

32. Salt and peace (Mk 9.50b). Crossan 1986: no. 213. Second person plural imperatives in two clauses connected by καί.

33. Receiving the kingdom like a child (Mk 10.15 // Mt. 18.3 // Lk. 18.17; *Gos. Thom.* 22). Crossan 1986: no. 446 (part of story in Mk 10.13-16 and par.).

34. Rich people and the kingdom (Mk 10.23b, 24b // Mt. 19.23 // Lk. 18.24; *Hermas, Sim.* 9.20.2b, 3b). Crossan 1986: no. 350 (part of 'dialogue' in Mk 10.23-27 and par.). Perhaps separated from Mk 10.24 and par., because separate in *Hermas, Sim.* 9.20.2b, 3b. Aphoristic sentence.

35. Camel through the needle's eye (Mk 10.25 // Mt. 19.24 // Lk. 18.25; *Gos. Naz.* 16). Crossan 1986: no. 350 (part of dialogue in Mk 10.23-27 and par.); in Crossan 1983: 332 it is isolated as Aphorism No. 20. Perhaps originally separate since it occurs separately in *Gos. Naz.* 16.

36. Impossible for people, possible for God (Mk 10.27 // Mt. 19.26 // Lk. 18.27). Crossan 1986: no. 350 (part of 'dialogue' in Mk 10.23-27 and par.). Küchler 1979: 589.

37. First and last (Mk 10.31 // Mt. 19.30; Mt. 20.16; Lk. 13.30; *P. Oxy.* 654 4.2; *Gos. Thom.* 4; Mk 9.35). Crossan 1986: no. 170. Küchler 1979: 589 (no. 59), 591 (no. 102).

38. Leader as slave (Mk 10.43-44; par. Mt. 20.26-27; Lk. 22.26; Mt. 23.11; Mk 9.35; Lk. 9.48). Crossan 1986: no. 172. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 103). Wisdom admonition without supporting clause if future indicative functions as imperative.

39. Believing prayer (Mk 11.24; Mt. 21.22). Crossan 1986: no. 85 (used as parallel to Ask, Seek, Knock saying despite major differences). Küchler 1979: 589. Second person plural imperatives. Wisdom admonition.

40. Forgive to be forgiven (Version 1, Mk 11.25; Mt. 6.14-15; Polycarp, *Phil.* 6.2; Version 2, Lk. 6.37c; *1 Clem.* 13.2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3). Crossan 1986: no. 72. Küchler 1979: 587 (includes Lk. 6.37b, c only). Version 1 deals with forgiveness sought from God in prayer, while Version 2 omits the context of prayer. Mk 11.25 is a wisdom admonition with a supporting clause introduced by ἵνα. Mt. 6.14-15 consists of two conditional sentences, the first positive ('if you forgive'), the second negative ('if you do not forgive').

41. Caesar and God (Mk 12.17 // Mt. 22.21 // Lk. 20.25; *Gos. Thom.* 100). Crossan 1986: no. 454 (included with story in Mk 12.13-17). Küchler 1979: 589. *Gos. Thom.* 100 adds third line, 'Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, / give God what belongs to God, / and give me what is mine'. Second person plural imperative. Wisdom admonition without supporting clause. Climactic saying in pronouncement story.

42. Endurance to the end (Mk 13.13b // Mt. 10.22b // Lk. 21.19; Mt. 24.13; *Did.* 16.5b). Crossan 1986: no. 111 (includes Mk 13.12-13 and par.). Küchler 1979: 589.

43. Watch and pray (Mk 14.38a // Mt. 26.41b // Lk. 22.46b). Crossan 1986: no. 464 (only as part of story of prayer in garden in Mk 14.32-42 and par.). Not listed in Crossan 1983. Küchler 1979: 590. Two second person plural imperatives in first line. Wisdom admonition. Lk. 22.45b indicates that this formulation was circulated separately.

44. Spirit is willing (Mk 14.38b // Mt. 26.41b; Polycarp, *Phil.* 7.2). Polycarp, *Phil.* 7.2 (where it is explicitly attributed to ὁ κύριος) indicates that this is an independent formulation, linked only in Mk 14.38a and Mt. 26.41b. Crossan 1986: no. 464 (only as part of story of prayer in garden in Mk 14.32-42 and par.). Not listed in Crossan 1983.

45. Unfruitful tree (Lk. 3.9b // Mt. 3.10b; 7.19). Crossan 1986: no. 35. Originally independent aphorism proven by use in Mt. 7.19 Two verbs in present tense. Aphoristic sentence.

46. Blessed are the poor (Lk. 6.20b // Mt. 5.3; *Gos. Thom.* 54; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3). Crossan 1986: no. 36; Crossan 1983: no. 27.

47. Blessed are the hungry (Lk. 6.21a // Mt. 5.6; *Gos. Thom.* 69). Crossan 1986: no. 39 .

48. Blessed are those who weep (Lk. 6.21b // Mt. 5.4). Crossan 1986: no. 37; Crossan 1983: no. 29.

49. Blessed are the persecuted (Lk. 6.22-23 // Mt. 5.10-12; *Gos. Thom.* 68, 69; 1 Pet. 4.14; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3). Crossan 1986: no. 43 .

50. Love your enemies (Lk. 6.27-28 // Mt. 5.44; *Did.* 1.3c; *P. Oxy.* 1224.2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 12.3; *Did.* 1.3). Crossan 1986: no. 62 (includes Lk. 6.27b-28, 35a, c and par.). Küchler 1979: 590 (includes Lk. 6.27-28, 32-36 and par.). Lk. 6.27-28 has four admonitions with second person plural imperatives: (1) love your enemies, (2) do good to those who hate you, (3) bless those who curse you, (4) pray for those who abuse you. Mt. 5.44 includes only (1) and (4). *P. Oxy.* 1224.2 has only 'pray for your enemies' (a combination of [1] and [4]).

51. Turn the other cheek (Lk. 6.29a // Mt. 5.39b). Crossan 1986: no. 60 (includes Lk. 6.29; Mt. 5.39b-41). Küchler 1979: 590 (includes Lk. 6.29-30 and par.). Second person singular imperative. Wisdom admonition without supporting clause.

52. Give your shirt too (Lk. 6.29b // Mt. 5.40; *Did.* 1.4). Crossan 1986: no. 60 (includes Lk. 6.29; Mt. 5.39b-41). Second person singular imperative. Wisdom admonition without supporting clause .

*53. Give to those who beg (Lk. 6.30 // Mt. 5.42; *Gos. Thom.* 95; *Dial. Sav.* 1.5a). Crossan 1986: no. 61. Saying out of place in Q (Bultmann 1970: 107). Second person singular imperative. Wisdom admonition without supporting clause.

*54. Golden rule (Lk. 6.31 // Mt. 7.12; Western text of Acts 15.20, 29a; *P. Oxy.* 654.6.2b; *Gos. Thom.* 6.2b; *Did.* 1.2b). Crossan 1986: no. 87. Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 78).

55. Judge not (Lk. 6.37a // Mt. 7.1-2a; *1 Clem.* 13.2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3). Crossan 1986: no. 81. Küchler 1979: 587 (lists Mt. 7.2a separately). Lk. 6.37a is a wisdom admonition with a negative imperative (μη κρίνετε). Mt. 7.1-2a also contains a reason for the negative command in a second member, 'For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged'. This appears secondary because of its redundancy. *1 Clem.* 13.2 is of interest because the admonition is phrased positively, 'As you judge, so you will be judged' (which could be based on Mt. 7.2a).

*56. Blind leading the blind (Lk. 6.39 // Mt. 15.14b // *Gos. Thom.* 34; *Epist. Apost.* 47.4). Crossan 1986: no. 150. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 99). Two rhetorical questions, second gives consequences.

*57. Pupil not above teacher (Lk. 6.40 // Mt. 10.24-25a; *Dial. Sav.* 53). Lk. has

pupil/teacher; Mt. has reduplicated form pupil/teacher, slave/master. Lk. 6.40 and *Dial. Sav.* 53 suggest that this aphorism circulated independently. Crossan 1986: no. 113. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 88). Synonymous couplet. Aphoristic sentence. See Mt. 10.24-25.

58. The speck and the log (Lk. 6.41-42 // Mt. 7.3-5; *Gos. Thom.* 26; *P. Oxy.* 1.26). Crossan 1986: no. 83; 1983: no. 44.4. Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 76).

59. No good tree bears bad fruit (Lk. 6.43 // Mt. 7.18). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of series of sayings in Lk. 6.43-45 and par.). Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 82).

60. Each tree is known by its fruit (Lk. 6.44 // Mt. 12.33b; 7.16a, 20). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of a series of sayings in Lk. 6.43-45 and par.). Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 80).

61. Figs are not gathered from thorns nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush (Lk. 6.44b // Mt. 7.16b). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of series of sayings in Lk. 6.43-45 and par.). Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 81).

62. Products of good and evil men (Lk. 6.45a; Mt. 13.35; *Gos. Thom.* 45.2). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of longer 'aphorism' in Mt. 7.16-20 and par.). Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 98). Metaphor followed by explanation in Lk. 6.45; explanation precedes metaphor in Mt. 12.34b-35. *Gos. Thom.* 45.2-3 follows order of Lk. 6.45, though *Gos. Thom.* secondary because of allegorical interpretation (storehouse = heart). Antithetical couplet. Aphoristic sentence.

63. Speaking from the heart (Lk. 6.45b // Mt. 12.34b). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of a larger aphoristic cluster), yet in Crossan 1983: 158-60, Lk. 6.43-45 is said to consist of five aphorisms (nos. 45-49). Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 97). Explanation without metaphor linked to Lk. 6.45a; possibly originally linked. Aphoristic sentence.

64. Luxurious clothing in king's courts (Lk. 7.25b // Mt. 11.8b; *Gos. Thom.* 78). Crossan 1986: no. 127 (part of longer speech in Lk. 7.24b-27 // Mt. 11.7b-10).

65. Children playing (Lk. 7.31-32 // Mt. 11.16-17). Crossan 1986: no. 131 (part of Lk. 7.31-35 // Mt. 11.16-19). Similitude. Incorporates what may have been a ditty which circulated independently (Küchler 1979: 591 [no. 93]), 'We piped to you, and you did not dance; / we wailed, and you did not weep'. Cf. A.A.T. Ehrhard, 'Greek Proverbs in the Gospel', in *The Framework of the New Testament Stories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964), pp. 44-63.

66. Wisdom is vindicated by all her children (Lk. 7.35 // Mt. 11.19b). Crossan 1986: no. 131 (part of Lk. 7.31-35 // Mt. 11.16-19).

67. Figs and thorns, grapes and brambles (Lk. 8.44b // Mt. 7.16).

*68. Foxes have holes (Lk. 9.58 // Mt. 8.20; *Gos. Thom.* 86). Crossan 1986: no. 96. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 84). Robbins (1989: 41) connects what appears to

me to be three separate mini-pronouncement stories into one (Lk. 9.57-62). Antithetical couplet. Aphoristic sentence.

69. Let the dead bury the dead (Lk. 9.60 // Mt. 8.22). Crossan 1986: no. 330 (part of dialogue). Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 85).

70. Plentiful harvest, few laborers (Lk. 10.2 // Mt. 9.37-38 // *Gos. Thom.* 73; cf. Jn 4.35, 37). Crossan 1986: no. 99. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 86).

*71. The laborer deserves his wages (Lk. 10.7b // Mt. 10.10b; 1 Tim. 5.18b; *Dial. Sav.* 53; *Did.* 13.2; cf. 1 Cor. 9.14). Crossan 1986: no. 104 (includes Lk. 10.5-7 // Mt. 10.10b-13, though Lk. 10.7b and par. treated separately in Crossan 1986: no. 104). Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 87). Aphoristic sentence, originally separate from present context (Hoffmann 1972: 298; Piper 1989: 134-35). The term μισθός (or its equivalent) occurs in Lk. 10.7b and 1 Tim. 5.18, while the term τροφή occurs in Mt. 10.10b, *Dial. Sav.* 53 and *Did.* 13.2; μισθός (appropriate in an urban setting) appears to be an explanation of the meaning of τροφή (appropriate in a rural setting). Fitzmyer (1981-85: 848) regards τροφή as original in Q. 1 Tim. 5.18 introduces two aphorisms with the phrase λέγει γάρ = γραφή which may refer to the first saying, quoted from Deut. 10.18, though the second is known only from Lk. 10.7b and par.

72. No one knows the Son except the Father (Lk. 10.22b // Mt. 11.27b). Crossan 1986: no. 133. Crossan 1983: no. 62 (includes Lk. 10.22 // Mt. 11.27). Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 94).

73. Ask, seek, knock (Lk. 11.9-10 // Mt. 7.7-8; *Gos. Thom.* 2 and 92, 'Seek and you will find' only; *Gos. Thom.* 94, 'He who seeks will find, and (he who knocks) will be let in' only; cf. *Dial. Sav.* 9-10d, 20c; *Gos. Heb.* 4). Crossan 1986: no. 85. Küchler 1979: 590 (includes Lk. 11.9-13 and par.). Wisdom admonition; 3 lines of climactic parallelism connected with 3 explanatory parallel lines connected with γάρ.

74. Giving good gifts (Lk. 11.11-13 // Mt. 7.9-11). Two rhetorical questions followed by a *minore ad maius* argument with the application. Crossan 1986: no. 86; Crossan 1983: no 68. It is possible that three separate wisdom sayings are involved.

75. For and against (Lk. 11.23a // Mt. 12.30a; Mk 9.40 // Lk. 9.50b; *P. Oxy.* 1224.2). Crossan 1986: no. 138. Present tense verbs. Aphoristic sentence. Independent aphorism because occurs separately in Mk 9.40 // Lk. 9.50b.

76. Gathering and scattering (Lk. 11.23b // Mt. 12.30b). Crossan 1986: no. 138 (includes Lk. 11.23a // Mt. 12.30a). Independent aphorism shown by fact that 'for and against' occurs separately in Mk 9.40 // Lk. 9.50b; *P. Oxy.* 1224.2.

*77. The place for a lamp (Lk. 11.33 // Mt. 5.15; Mk 4.21 // Lk. 8.16; *Gos. Thom.* 33). Crossan 1986: no. 47. Küchler 1979: 589. Originally circulated independent of context in Lk. 8.16-18, a Lukan 'doublet' (Fitzmyer 1981-85: 81, 716). Davies and Allison (1988: 476) refer to this as a parable. *Gos. Thom.* 33 probably dependent on

Lk. 11.33 and/or 8.16 (Fitzmyer 1981–85: 717).

78. Eye is lamp of body (Lk. 11.34a // Mt. 6.22; cf. *Dial. Sav.* 8). Crossan 1986: no. 76 (includes Lk. 11.34–36 // Mt. 6.22–23, which certainly now constitutes a rhetorical unity). Küchler 1979: 590. Aphoristic sentence which may have originally circulated independently (Betz 1985: 73).

79. Open proclamation (Lk. 12.3 // Mt. 10.27; *Gos. Thom.* 33.1). Crossan 1986: no. 116. More specific aphorism about how secrets will be revealed appended to Mk 4.22 and par.

80. Whom to fear (Lk. 12.4–5 // Mt. 10.28; 2 *Clem.* 5.4b). Crossan 1986: no. 117. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 90).

81. Confessing Jesus before people (Lk. 12.8–9. // Mt. 10.32–33; 2 *Clem.* 3.2; Rev. 3.5).

82. Avoiding anxiety (Lk. 12.22–23 // Mt. 6.25; *P. Oxy.* 655.1–17; *Gos. Thom.* 36). Crossan 1986: no. 78 (part of more extensive section in Lk. 12.22–31 // Mt. 6.25–33, which is far too extensive to qualify as an aphorism). Crossan (1983: 338) breaks this up into three aphorisms: (1) no. 93, Lk. 12.22–24, 27–38, and par., (2) no. 94, Lk. 12.25 and par., and (3) no. 93. Küchler 1979: 590 (includes Lk. 12.22ff., 27–31 and par., a far too extensive section of text to qualify as an aphorism). This is an instructional wisdom admonition with a second-person plural imperative (μὴ μεριμνᾶτε) in the first line with a motive clause introduced by γάρ in the second line in Lk. 12.23, but with a rhetorical question in the second line in Mt. 6.25. *Gos. Thom.* 36 does not contain a motive clause, and appears to be a condensation of the older Greek text *P. Oxy.* 655.1–17, which in turn is a condensation of Lk. 12.22–27 or Mt. 6.25–28 (Fitzmyer 1981–85: 976).

*83. Anxiety won't help you live longer (Lk. 12.25 // Mt. 6.27). Crossan 1983: 338 (isolated as Aphorism 94); 1986: no. 78 (part of extensive aphorism in Mt. 6.25–33 // Lk. 12.22–31). Küchler 1979: 590. Rhetorical question. Aphoristic sentence.

84. Treasure in heaven (Lk. 12.33b; Mt. 6.19–20; *Gos. Thom.* 76). Crossan 1986: no. 74. Küchler 1979: 590 (combines Lk. 12. 33 and 34 and par.). Second person plural imperative μὴ θησαυρίζετε, 'do not store up'. Wisdom admonition with reason when combined with Lk. 12.34 // Mt. 6.21.

85. Treasure and heart (Lk. 12.34 // Mt. 6.21; Just., *I Apol.* 15.16). Crossan 1986: no. 75. Küchler 1979: 590 (combines Lk. 12.33 and 34 and par.). A 'where/there' aphorism (see Lk. 17.37 // Mt. 24.28). Two lines with present tense verbs connected with καί. Aphoristic sentence. Possibly separate from preceding because it switches to second person singular, but in Matthew only (catchword connection in θησαυρός). Justin has the third person singular in *I Apol.* 15.16, 'For where the treasure is, there is the mind of the person'.

86. Settle with your accuser (Lk. 12.58–59; Mt. 5.25–26; cf. *Did.* 1.5b). Crossan

1986: no. 55. Wisdom admonition (second person singular). Lk. 12.59; Mt. 5.26 probably later addition (Zeller 1977: 66-67).

87. Enter the narrow gate (Lk. 13.24 // Mt. 7.13-14). Crossan 1986: no. 88. Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 79). Second person plural imperative εἰσελθατε, 'enter in' (Mt. 7.13); ἀγωνίζεσθε εἰσελθεῖν, 'strive to enter' (Lk. 13.24). Wisdom admonition.

*88. Exalted will be humbled (Lk. 14.11 // Mt. 23.12; Lk. 18.14; cf. Mt. 18.4). Cf. Ezek. 21.26b, 'Exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high' (Sir. 1.30; 32.1-2 ['If they make you master of the feast, do not exalt yourself']). Crossan 1986: no. 180. Küchler 1979: 591 (no. 104). Paradox in antithetical couplet constitutes a 'future reversal' proverb used to adapt aphorisms to an eschatological setting.

89. Tasteless salt (Lk. 14.34-35a // Mt. 5.13; Mk 9.50a). Crossan 1986: no. 44.

90. Serving two masters (Lk. 16.13a // Mt. 6.24a; *Gos. Thom.* 47.2; 2 *Clem.* 6.1). Crossan 1986: no. 77 (includes aphoristic cluster in Lk. 16.13; Mt. 6.24). Küchler 1979: 590. *Gos. Thom.* 47.2 is expanded by prefacing it with *Gos. Thom.* 47.1 an aphorism on the impossibility of mounting two horses. Aphoristic sentence.

91. Corpse and vultures (Lk. 17.37b // Mt. 24.28). Crossan 1986: no. 198. Küchler 1979: 592 (no. 106). A 'where/there' aphorism (see no. 85, Lk. 12.34 // Mt. 6.21).

92. Taking up what you did not lay down (Lk. 19.21b, 22b). Crossan 1986: no. 15 (part of Lk. 19.12b-27). Küchler 1979: 592 (no. 107). Sounds like a proverb and has parallels in Greek writers (Fitzmyer 1981-85: 1237; he suggests that it was inserted by Luke). Following the tendency of parallel metaphors in two members, it appears that Luke found this aphorism in Q.

93. Reaping what you did not sow (Lk. 19.21c, 22c // Mt. 25.24b, 26b). Crossan 1986: no. 15 (part of Lk. 19.12b-27 // Mt. 25.14-30, a parable). Küchler 1979: 592 (no. 107).

94. Gathering where you did not winnow (Mt. 25.24c, 26c). Crossan 1986: no. 15 (part of parable of Entrusted Money). Following the tendency of parallel metaphors in two members it appears that Matthew did not add this aphorism, but rather found it in Q^{Mt}.

95. Blessed are the meek (Mt. 5.5; *Did.* 3.7; cf. *Barn.* 19.4; Ps. 36.11a [MT 37.11a]). Crossan 1986: no. 38. While Mt. 5.5 is in the form of a beatitude, *Did.* 3.7 is a wisdom admonition with a second person singular present imperative ἴσθι (note the second person future indicative in ἔσῃ παῦς in *Barn.* 19.4); the supporting reason in line 2 introduced by ἐπεὶ. Audet (1958: 320) suggests that *Did.* 3.7 circulated independently. Jefford (1989: 80) suggests that Mt. 5.5 and *Did.* 3.7 are dependent on Ps. 36.11a, each of which reformulated the saying in a different way.

96. Blessed are the merciful (Mt. 5.7). Crossan 1986: no. 40 (omits parallels in *1 Clem.* 13.2 and Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3).

97. Blessed are the pure in heart (Mt. 5.8). Crossan 1986: no. 41.

98. Blessed are the peacemakers (Mt. 5.9). Crossan 1986: no. 42.

*99. A city on a hill (Mt. 5.14b; *P. Oxy.* 1.32; *Gos. Thom.* 32). Crossan 1986: no. 46. Possibly from Q (Luz 1985: 220). Aphorism is intrusive and reproduces a traditional wisdom saying (Davies and Allison 1988: 475). Aphoristic sentence.

100. You cannot make one hair white or black (Mt. 5.36b). Crossan 1986: no. 59 (part of Mt. 5.34b-37). Küchler 1979: 587. Second person singular subjunctive of prohibition.

101. Let your word be yes, yes or no, no (Mt. 5.37). Crossan 1986: no. 59 (part of Mt. 5.34b-37 and par.). Küchler 1979: 587. Third person singular present imperative ἐστω.

102. Do not let the left hand know what the right hand does (Mt. 6.3). Crossan 1986: no. 66 (part of longer paraenetic section in Mt. 6.2-4). Küchler 1979: 587. Third person singular aorist imperative γνώτω.

103. Be not anxious for tomorrow (Mt. 6.34a). Crossan 1986: no. 79. Second person plural subjunctive of prohibition. Wisdom admonition with supporting clause. Some think aphorism is a secondary interpretation 'in wisdom style' (Luz 1985: 34) or a redactional addition based on popular wisdom tradition (parallels in Davies and Allison 1988: 662).

104. Each day's trouble (Mt. 6.34b; cf. *Dial. Sav.* 53). Crossan 1986: no. 80. Second person plural imperative; wisdom admonition.

*105. Don't give what is holy to dogs (Mt. 7.6a; *Did.* 9.5b). Crossan 1986: no. 84 (includes Mt. 7.6b, c). Küchler 1979: 587. The separate circulation of this admonition (verbally identical in both versions) is suggested by its occurrence in *Did.* 9.5b, though the final redactor of the *Didache* could have used Matthew (Köster 1957: 199). Jefford (1989: 140) is convinced that *Did.* 9.5b is based on Matthaean tradition.

*106. Pearls before swine (Mt. 7.6b; *Gos. Thom.* 93). Crossan 1986: no. 84 (included Mt. 7.6a). Küchler 1979: 587. Mt. 7.6 has four lines, first two and the last two in synonymous parallelism, arranged as a chiasm (Davies and Allison 1988: 677):

- a Do not give dogs what is holy;
- b Do not throw your pearls before swine
- b' Lest they [swine] trample them under foot
- a And [lest the dogs] turn to attack you.

Gos. Thom. 93 (probably independent of Mt.; Davies and Allison 1988: 674) has

four lines, with negative consequences in second and fourth lines. *Did.* 9.5b preserves only first line of aphorism in Mt. and *Gos. Thom.*, and appears dependent on Mt. or special Matthaean tradition (Jefford 1989: 140).

107. Grapes from thorns (Mt. 7.16). Not in Crossan.

108. Every sound tree bears good fruit (Mt. 7.17; cf. 12.33). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of Mt. 7.16-20 and par., which is divided up into four separate aphorisms in Crossan 1983: nos. 45-48). Küchler 1979: 587.

109. Trees that do not bear fruit (Mt. 7.19). Crossan 1986: no. 90 (part of series of sayings in Mt. 7.16-20 and par.). Küchler 1979: 590 (no. 83).

110. Give without reward (Mt. 10.8b). Crossan 1986: no. 102.

*111. Wise as serpents (Mt. 10.16). Crossan 1986: no. 108. Second person plural imperative. Wisdom admonition without supporting clause. Possibly drawn from secular Jewish folklore (Bultmann 1970: 112).

112. Slave not above master (Mt. 10.24-25; Jn 13.16a; 15.20a). The use of this aphorism in John suggests that it circulated independently of the pupil/teacher aphorism in Lk. 6.40 and par. Crossan 1986: no. 113 (pupil/teacher, slave/master aphorisms lumped together). Jn 13.16a expands slave/master aphorism with messenger/sender aphorism, which is probably simply a Johannine expansion (absent from Jn 15.20a). Aphoristic sentence.

113. Master and household (Mt. 10.25b). Crossan 1986: no. 114. Rhetorical question with a *minore ad maius* argument.

114. Receiving a prophet (Mt. 10.41). Crossan 1986: no. 125. Synonymous couplet. Aphoristic sentence.

115. A cup of water (Mt. 10.42 // Mk 9.41). Crossan 1986: no. 126.

116. Come to me all who labor (Mt. 11.28-30; *Gos. Thom.* 90). Crossan 1986: no. 134. Crossan 1983: no. 64. Küchler 1979: 587.

117. Justified or condemned by your words (Mt. 12.36-37). Crossan 1986: no. 140. Küchler 1979: 587 (includes 12.37 only).

*118. Scribe trained for the kingdom (Mt. 13.52). Crossan 1986: no. 338 (part of 'dialogue' in Mt. 13.51-52). Simile introduced with ὁμοίως ἐστίν. Aphoristic sentence.

119. Every plant not planted by the father will be uprooted (Mt. 15.13; cf. *Gos. Thom.* 40; Ignatius, *Trall.* 11.1; *Philad.* 3.1). Crossan 1986: no. 148. Küchler 1979: 587.

120. On eunuchs (Mt. 19.12a). Crossan 1986: no. 348 (only as dialogue in Mt. 19.10-12a). Aphoristic sentence (three lines, present tense verb in each).

Regarded by Perdue (1986: 12-13) as a Numerical Saying (cf. Prov. 30.18-19, 21-23).

121. The one able to receive (Mt. 19.12b; Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 6.1b). Crossan 1986: no. 168. Third person singular imperative. Wisdom admonition.

122. Many called, few chosen (Mt. 22.14; *Barn.* 4.14b). Crossan 1986: no. 174. Küchler 1979: 587. Present tense verb in first of two clauses connected with δέ. Antithetical parallelism. Aphoristic sentence.

123. Preaching but not practicing (Mt. 23.3b). Crossan 1986: no. 176 (includes Mt. 23.2-3).

124. Avoiding titles (Mt. 23.8-10). Crossan 1986: no. 179. Three second person plural subjunctive prohibitions. Wisdom admonitions with supporting clauses. Classified as Community Rule by Bultmann (1970: 154-56).

125. Those who take the sword perish by the sword (Mt. 26.52b). Crossan 1986: no. 465 (part of story of the arrest of Jesus in Mt. 26.47-56 and par.). Küchler 1979: 587. Expresses principle of *lex talionis* frequently found in aphorisms.

126. Physician heal yourself (Lk. 4.23). Crossan 1986: no. 214. Küchler 1979: 587.

*127. Old wine better (Lk. 5.39; *Gos. Thom.* 47.2). Crossan 1986: no. 216. Küchler 1979: 587. Present tense verbs in two clauses, the second clause supports the first. Textually problematic; absent from Codex Bezae, Old Latin, Marcion, Irenaeus and Eusebius. Explanatory clause absent from *Gos. Thom.* 47.2; possibly added by Luke (Fitzmyer 1981-85: 602). Aphoristic sentence.

128. Do not condemn (Lk. 6.37b). Crossan 1986: no. 222.

129. Forgive and be forgiven (Lk. 6.37c; *1 Clem.* 13.2; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3; cf. Mt. 6.14-15; Mk 11.25; Polycarp, *Phil.* 6.2). Crossan 1986: no. 72. Crossan 1983: no. 65.

130. Give and it will be given to you (Lk. 6.38a, b; *1 Clem.* 13.2d [contains a version of Lk. 6.38a only]). Crossan 1986: no. 221. Küchler 1979: 588 (includes only Lk. 6.38a).

131. The one forgiven little loves little (Lk. 7.47b). Crossan 1986: no. 459 (part of story in Mk 14.3-9 and par.). Küchler 1979: 588.

132. Looking back (Lk. 9.62). Crossan 1986: no. 364 (classifies Lk. 9.61-62 as a dialogue). Robbins (1989: 41) links three mini-pronouncement stories together as one, Lk. 9.57-62. Climactic saying in brief pronouncement story.

133. Beware of covetousness (Lk. 12.15). Crossan 1986: no. 482 (part of story in Lk. 12.13-15). Küchler 1979: 588 (includes only Lk. 12.15b). Two second person plural imperatives. Wisdom admonition with supporting clause introduced

by ὄτι. Lacks all metaphorical features.

134. Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning (Lk. 12.35; *Did.* 16.1a). Crossan 1986: no. 17 (part of parable of returning master in Mk 13.34-36; Lk. 12.35-38). Negative formulation and reverse order of clauses in *Did.* 16.1a ('Let not your lamps be quenched and let not your loins be ungirded, but be ready') suggests independence of Luke (Köster 1957: 175-76). Possibly circulated independently of vv. 36-38 (Bultmann 1970: 124-25). Third person plural imperative ἑσθώσαν. Aphoristic admonition with supporting clause.

135. Waiting slaves (Lk. 12.36). Crossan 1986: no. 17 (part of parable of returning master). Abbreviated parable (Evans 1990: 532), or hortatory admonition (Fitzmyer 1981-85: 985).

136. Master as slave (Lk. 12.37-38). Crossan 1986: no. 17 (part of parable of returning master). Compositional unity of this saying indicated by the beatitudes which frame it.

137. Heavy and light beatings (Lk. 12.47-48a). Omitted by Crossan 1986. Küchler 1979: 588. Two antithetical lines connected with δέ.

138. Much given, much required (Lk. 12.48b). Crossan 1986: no. 225. Küchler 1979: 588. Probably originally circulated independently (Bultmann 1970: 87; Fitzmyer 1981-85: 991-92). Non-metaphorical. A couplet of synonymous parallelism. Aphoristic sentence.

*139. Places at table (Lk. 14.8-10). Crossan 1986: no. 227. Küchler 1979: 588. This illustration is to an example story what a similitude is to a parable (Bultmann 1970: 193); a mashal (cf. Prov. 25.6-7) has been enlarged into moral picture, concluding with a general application in the form of a proverb on self-exaltation, Lk. 14.11. Bultmann considers this aphorism so typical of popular wisdom that he wonders how it was included in Jesus tradition (1970: 108). Fitzmyer calls this a 'hortatory counsel' with an appended wisdom saying in v. 11 (1981-85: 1044-45), but it contains a second person singular subjunctive of prohibition, and so is a wisdom admonition with a supportive clause (Zeller 1977: 67-69).

*140. Invite outcasts (Lk. 14.12-14). Crossan 1986: no. 228. Küchler 1979: 588. Example illustration in the form of a 'hortatory counsel' (Fitzmyer 1981-85: 1044-45). Second person singular subjunctive of prohibition. Wisdom admonition with supporting clause (Zeller 1977: 69-71).

141. Children of this age wiser than the children of light (Lk. 16.8b). Crossan 1986 omits. Küchler 1979: 588.

142. Make friends of Mammon (Lk. 16.9). Crossan 1986: no. 230. Küchler 1979: 588. Second person singular imperative ἑαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους, 'make yourselves friends'. Wisdom admonition.

*143. Faithful in least, faithful in much (Lk. 16.10; 2 *Clem.* 8.5; cf. Lk. 19.17 // Mt.

20.21). Crossan 1986: no. 231 (part of more extensive aphorism in Lk. 16.10-12). Küchler 1979: 588. Aphoristic statement using the *a minore ad maius* argument, probably circulated independently of present context in Lk. 16.10-12. The expanded saying in 2 *Clem.* 8.5 suggests that a saying of independent oral origin was prefixed to the saying borrowed from Lk. 16.10 (Evans 1990: 603):

If you did not guard that which is small,
who shall give you that which is great?
For I tell you that he who is faithful in that which is least
is faithful also in that which is much.

144. Exalted before people (Lk. 16.15). Crossan 1986: no. 486 (conclusion of pronouncement story in Lk. 16.14-15). Küchler 1979: 588.

145. Remember Lot's wife (Lk. 17.32). Crossan 1986: no. 195 (includes Lk. 17.31-32 and par. under the rubric 'Time for Flight').

146. Who is greater, the served or the server? (Lk. 22.27a). Crossan 1986: no. 172 (part of discourse material in Lk. 22.25-27 and par.). Küchler 1979: 588.

147. Green and dry wood (Lk. 23.31). Absent from Crossan 1986. Küchler 1979: 588. Rhetorical question incorporating *a minore ad maius* argument. Cf. Ezek. 20.47, and the rabbinic saying 'When fire consumes the green, what will the dry do?' (Strack-Billerbeck, II: 263). Omitted by Crossan 1986.

148. The wind and the spirit (Jn 3.8; Ignatius, *Philad.* 7.1 [cf. Jn 8.14]). Crossan 1986: no. 238. Similitude (Dodd 1963: 366-69). Maurer (1949: 29) regards Ignatius, *Philad.* 7.1 as a certain citation of a combination of Jn 8.14 and 3.8 though it is possible that this 'quotation' simply reflects a widely-known formula known to Ignatius apart from John.

149. The bridegroom and his friend (Jn 3.29). Crossan 1986: no. 331 (part of dialogue). Parable (Dodd 1963: 385-86).

150. One sows, another reaps (Jn 4.37). Crossan 1986: no. 425 (part of story in Jn 4.35-38). Proverb in general currency quoted by Jesus. Verb in present tense in first clause linked to second clause by καί. Aphoristic sentence.

151. Son as apprentice of father (Jn 5.19-20a). Crossan 1986: no. 430 (part of story).

152. The slave and the son (Jn 8.35). Not in Crossan 1986. Parable according to Dodd 1963: 379-82.

153. Stumbling at night (Jn 11.9-10). Crossan 1986: no. 45 (distant parallel to Mt. 5.14a). Parable according to Dodd 1963: 373-79.

154. Kernel of wheat (Jn 12.24). Absent from Crossan 1986. Similitude or parable (Dodd 1963: 369).

155. Woman in labor (Jn 16.21). Absent from Crossan 1986. Similitude or parable.
156. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20.35b; *I Clem.* 2.1; cf. *Did.* 1.5). Crossan 1986: 245.
157. Love your brother (*Gos. Thom.* 25). Crossan 1986: no. 286. Jewish proverbial expression (Grant and Freedman 1960: 146); first half from Lev. 19.17-18. Probably independent of Synoptic saying 'love your neighbor as yourself' in Mt. 22.39 (Davies 1983: 6).
158. Become passers-by (*Gos. Thom.* 42). Crossan 1986: no. 291 (no parallels).
159. The impossibility of riding two horses and stretching two bows (*Gos. Thom.* 47.1). Crossan 1986: no. 292 (no parallels). Hill 1990: 10.
160. No physician heals those who know him (*Gos. Thom.* 31; *P. Oxy.* 1.31). Crossan 1986: no. 146 (only as parallel to Mk 6.4 and par., though there is no real relationship); 1983: no. 7.
161. Guard the small, receive the great (*I Clem.* 8.5). See Lk. 16.10.
- If you did not guard that which is small,
who shall give you that which is great?
162. Be merciful to obtain mercy (*I Clem.* 13.2a; Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3; cf. Mt. 5.7). Crossan 1986: no. 40 lists Mt. 5.7 without parallels, 'Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy'. This sentiment is expressed as an admonition in identical words in *I Clem.* 13.2a and Polycarp, *Phil.* 2.3, ἐλεᾶτε ἵνα ἐλεηθῇτε.
163. As you do, so it shall be done to you (*I Clem.* 13.2c). Crossan 1986: no. 318. Statement of reciprocity.
164. Be kind and you will be treated kindly (*I Clem.* 13.2-3). Crossan 1986: no. 319. Statement of reciprocity. One of seven aphorisms of similar structure, probably not dependent on written Gospels but on a written collection of sayings no longer extant or on oral tradition (Köster 1957: 12-16).
165. The foot of a ghost or demon does not join to the ground (*Epist. Apost.* 11). Hill 1990: 11-16.
166. What has fallen will arise (*Epist. Apost.* 25). Hill 1990: 17-21.
167. Are the fingers of the hand alike? (*Epist. Apost.* 32.2). Hill 1990: 21-24.

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ILLUMINATING THE KINGDOM:
NARRATIVE MESHALIM IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Birger Gerhardsson

1. *Introduction*

Part of what the Synoptic evangelists tell us about Jesus of Nazareth is that he used to teach ἐν παραβολαῖς (e.g. Mk 4.2 par.). This does not simply mean 'in parables'—as we generally put it—but 'in meshalim'. When ancient Jewish teachers used the Hebrew word מָשָׁל (mashal, meshalim in the plural) they had in mind a short, carefully formulated text, which could be of many different kinds: a maxim, a proverb, a riddle, a taunt, etc., as well as a brief narrative, an illustration, a parable, an allegory, or even a pregnant prophetic or apocalyptic saying, all distinguished by their skilful formulation from flat everyday speech.¹

I have suggested elsewhere that we borrow the Hebrew term 'mashal' and use it as a basic designation for the independent units within the Synoptic sayings tradition, brief ones as well as longer ones. I have also suggested that we divide these meshalim into two categories, corresponding to our conventional distinction between logia and parables: aphoristic meshalim and narrative meshalim.²

This paper will deal with the *narrative* meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels. I exclude John; this Gospel deserves separate treatment, not least its speeches and other utterances of Jesus where we find few

1. I do not share the opinion that a text must be a written presentation.

2. See my article, 'The Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels', *NTS* 34 (1988), pp. 339-42. In our conventional usage (since Jülicher), the designation 'parable' is used both as an inclusive term, covering all types, and as a designation of one of the types (parables proper in contrast to similitudes and example stories). This inconvenience disappears if my nomenclature is used.

narrative meshalim of the Synoptic kind, if any.¹ Nor do I discuss the extracanonical Gospels, all of which are later than the Synoptics.

Material

By my count, there are 55 texts in the Synoptic Gospels which can be classified as narrative meshalim: five in Mark, 21 in Matthew and 29 in Luke. There are, of course, in addition to these, a number of borderline cases which I assign to the aphoristic meshalim. And some of my narrative meshalim are on the borderline, especially The Watchful Servants in Mark (13.32-37) and Luke (12.35-38), The Burglar in Matthew (24.42-44) and Luke (12.39-40), and The Defendant in Luke (12.58-59).

A further ambiguity in the classification may be noted. I classify the double narrative about the Great Feast and the Wedding Garment in Matthew (22.1-10, 11-14) as two meshalim, though they could be seen as one mashal with two points of climax. I also count The Tower Builder and The Warring King in Luke (14.25-30, 31-33) as two meshalim, although they could be taken as one double mashal.

My figures are gross figures: three narrative meshalim appear in all three of the Synoptics, Matthew and Luke have another seven (or eight) in common,² Mark and Luke yet another. I include each occurrence as part of an evangelist's text.

My material is as follows. The verse references include the whole pericope, with the narrative mashal itself cited in brackets.

Mark

1. The Sower, 4.1-20 (3-8).
2. The Seed Growing Secretly, 4.26-29.
3. The Mustard Seed, 4.30-32.
4. The Wicked Husbandmen, 12.1-12 (1-9).
5. The Watchful Servants, 13.32-37 (34).

1. See, however, 3.29; 5.19-20; 10.1-6, 11-13; 11.9-10; 12.24-25; and 16.21-22. On the peculiarity of John, cf. J.D.G. Dunn's paper in this volume.

2. The number depends on our view of The Talents in Matthew and The Pounds in Luke: should they be counted as two different narrative meshalim or as one and the same?

Matthew

1. The Two Builders, 7.24-27.
2. The Playing Children, 11.16-19 (16-17).
3. The Sower, 13.1-23 (3-8).
4. The Tares, 13.24-30, 36-43 (24-30).
5. The Mustard Seed, 13.31-32.
6. The Leaven, 13.33.
7. The Hidden Treasure, 13.44.
8. The Pearl of Great Price, 13.45-46.
9. The Dragnet, 13.47-50 (47-48).
10. The Lost Sheep, 18.10-14 (12-13).
11. The Unmerciful Servant, 18.21-35 (23-34).
12. The Labourers in the Vineyard, 20.1-16 (1-15).
13. The Two Sons, 21.28-32 (28-30).
14. The Wicked Husbandmen, 21.33-44 (33-41).
15. The Great Feast, 22.1-10 (2-10).
16. The Wedding Garment, 22.11-14 (11-12).
17. The Burglar, 24.42-44 (43).
18. The Servant in Authority, 24.45-51.
19. The Ten Virgins, 25.1-13 (1-12).
20. The Talents, 25.14-30.
21. The Last Judgment, 25.31-46.

Luke

1. The Two Builders, 6.46-49 (47-49).
2. The Playing Children, 7.31-35 (31-32).
3. The Two Debtors, 7.36-50 (41-42).
4. The Sower, 8.4-15 (5-8).
5. The Good Samaritan, 10.25-37 (30-35).
6. The Friend at Midnight, 11.5-10 (5-8).
7. The Rich Fool, 12.13-21 (16-20).
8. The Watchful Servants, 12.35-38.
9. The Burglar, 12.39-40 (39).
10. The Servant in Authority, 12.41-46 (42-46).
11. The Defendant, 12.58-59.
12. The Barren Fig Tree, 13.6-9.
13. The Mustard Seed, 13.18-19.
14. The Leaven, 13.20-21.
15. The Closed Door, 13.23-30 (24-27).

16. The Wedding Guests, 14.7-11 (8-11).
17. The Great Feast, 14.15-24 (16-24).
18. The Tower Builder, 14.25-30 (28-30).
19. The Warring King, 14.31-33 (31-32).
20. The Lost Sheep, 15.1-7 (4-6).
21. The Lost Coin, 15.8-10 (8-9).
22. The Prodigal Son, 15.11-32.
23. The Unjust Steward, 16.1-13 (1-7).
24. The Rich Man and Lazarus, 16.19-31.
25. The Servant's Reward, 17.7-10 (7-9).
26. The Unjust Judge, 18.1-8 (2-5).
27. The Pharisee and the Publican, 18.9-14 (10-14).
28. The Pounds, 19.11-27 (12-27).
29. The Wicked Husbandmen, 20.9-19 (9-16).

My Task

Our central question is how these 55 texts have been transmitted during the period between Jesus and the evangelists. Unfortunately, Mark, Matthew and Luke gave no thought to informing us about this. We are left to find out for ourselves what we want to know.

In order to come to grips with our question, I will establish a basis on which judgments can be made by classifying, analysing and describing the relevant transmitted material from several important points of view. This fundamental work must be done first of all. To a great extent, it can be done with a high degree of objectivity. The question of the way in which the material has been transmitted is far more tricky but represents our goal. I am afraid I will advance only a little on my way towards that goal in this paper.

In what follows, I will largely limit myself to the Synoptic material. I shall not work in a traditio-historical way, trying to separate earlier text elements from later ones. That would be to pre-suppose much of what I want to find out. Instead I will take the extant Synoptic Gospels as witnesses. I will study *the pertinent pericopes as we find them* and note observations and judgments that can be made directly on them (2-8) and conclusions that can be drawn from them (9-12). The discussion is broader in the later part of my paper (9-12), where I also bring in certain insights from comparative material.

To avoid unwarranted generalizations, I shall consider throughout

all narrative meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels and take each of the three Synoptic Gospels by itself.

2. Where Are the Narrative Meshalim Situated?

Place within the Gospels

None of the evangelists presents Jesus' narrative meshalim consecutively, serialized in the same loose way as, for example, the aphoristic meshalim follow each other in Proverbs (especially in certain sections). In the Gospels the material has been worked into an organized composition, a coherent story about Jesus' life and work on earth. It is *within* this 'orderly account' (διήγησις) that we encounter and must interpret the single pericopes, in this case those which contain a narrative mashal. Unfortunately, space does not permit me, this time, to discuss in any detail how the single narrative mashal stands in relation to the larger context outside its pericope.

Our first question is then: *where* do the evangelists place the narrative meshalim they convey to their readers? We note immediately that these texts do not appear just anywhere in the Gospels. They are not to be found in the introductory chapters of the Gospels. The first one in Mark appears in ch. 4, in Matthew in ch. 7, and in Luke in ch. 6. Nor does a narrative mashal appear at the end of the Gospels, in the Passion and resurrection narratives, Mark 14–16, Matthew 26–28, Luke 22–24.

A narrative mashal is never presented as part of the short narratives about mighty acts of Jesus or other remarkable episodes from his ministry. There are a few apparent exceptions to this rule, but in such cases the connection is very loose and clearly secondary (e.g. Lk. 7.36–50; 13.10–20 and the conversation in 10.25–37).

In Matthew and Mark, and not rarely in Luke, the narrative meshalim are parts of fictive 'speeches' of Jesus or sections dominated by sayings; some twenty times a narrative mashal functions as a forceful concluding text.¹

Three of Mark's five narrative meshalim are to be found in ch. 4, and one in each of chs. 12 and 13. Matthew has 16 of his 21 examples

1. Mk 4.30–32; 13.32–37; Mt. 7.24–27; 11.16–19; 13.47–50; 18.23–35; 20.1–16; 21.33–44; 22.11–14; 25.31–46; Lk. 6.46–49; 7.31–35; 12.58–59; 13.20–21; 14.15–24; 16.19–31; 17.7–10; and 19.11–27.

in three collections (seven in ch. 13, four in chs. 21–22, and five in chs. 24–25); the rest are scattered in chs. 7, 11, 18 (two) and 20. For his part, Luke has four in a sequence in chs. 15–16, three at another place (ch. 12), and a couple of double meshalim (chs. 13 and 14); all the other narrative meshalim occur by themselves, rather uniformly distributed over chs. 7–8, 10–20.

Thus Luke is more inclined than Mark or Matthew to treat the narrative mashal as an independent text, worthy of a frame of its own, though even this tendency is not at all pervasive.

Pedagogical Place

None of the evangelists has a narrative mashal in utterances in which the message of Jesus has an initial, elementary or summarizing character. In such texts the sayings are propositional, aphoristic meshalim in religious plain speech or something very close to plain speech.

Nor does any evangelist have Jesus perform a single mighty act by uttering a narrative mashal. In such cases, too, Jesus speaks in religious plain speech or something closely akin to it.

The same principle applies to those utterances in which Jesus declares why he has come, what position he has or under what circumstances he is working (Son-of-Man-sayings, ἡλθον-sayings, ἐγώ-sayings). In such cases we do not find a narrative mashal.

All three evangelists situate Jesus' narrative meshalim unambiguously and consistently in contexts where Jesus *explains himself* more fully: when he teaches in public or privately, when he answers questions or refutes attacks, etc. We can say without much oversimplification that the place of the narrative meshalim in the Gospels shows that they are all *part of Jesus' teaching proper*.¹ (I use the word 'teaching' in a broad sense so that even answers given to opponents are included.) The narrative meshalim never appear in Jesus' elementary proclamation, never when he presents his message initially, plainly or straightforwardly.²

1. Note Mark's introductory words before The Sower (4.2): καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ διδασκῇ αὐτοῦ.

2. See further my 'The Narrative Meshalim', pp. 358–60.

3. Some External Data¹

The Length of the Narrative Meshalim

The length of our meshalim varies. The narrative body of the briefest is one verse, of the longest 22 verses. Thirty-three (60%) are four verses or less, and only nine (16%) ten verses or more. The narrative mashal is a short text.

Different Types

Commonly a distinction is made between 'parables' which make a comparison with a universal phenomenon (*similitudines*, *Gleichnisse*) and those which seize upon an invented, individual case (*parabola*, *Parabel*). With my terminology, I would speak of narrative meshalim of the *similitude* and of the *parable* type respectively. As to the material in the Gospels, this distinction does not seem to be very significant. The two kinds are more or less equally common, and it is in more than one case uncertain to which of the two sorts a mashal belongs: a universal phenomenon can be related as a single case.

Half the narrative meshalim in the Gospels (28 out of 55) are of the parable type (eight of these uncertain, however), while 22 are of the similitude type (two of them uncertain).

It is also common practice to classify four of our texts as *Beispiel-Erzählungen* (*exempla*); I would call them narrative meshalim of an *example* type. These are all in Luke. But it should be noticed that, with one exception, the characters of even these four narratives are not named; they are not figures drawn from history or literature but are of the same type as those found in the remaining narrative meshalim of the Gospels. The Last Judgment in Matthew 25 is of a *predictive, prophetic-didactic* type.²

1. For a view of the characters, utterances and style of the narrative meshalim, cf. R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd edn, 1931), pp. 193-222.

2. (a) Narrative meshalim of an example type: in Luke, The Good Samaritan, The Rich Fool, The Rich Man and Lazarus, The Pharisee and the Publican; (b) of a parable type: in Mark, The Sower (?), The Wicked Husbandmen, The Watchful Servants (?); in Matthew, The Two Builders (?), The Playing Children (?), The Sower (?), The Tares, The Unmerciful Servant, The Labourers in the Vineyard, The Two Sons, The Wicked Husbandmen, The Great Feast, The Wedding Garment, The Ten Virgins, The Talents; in Luke, The Two Builders, The Playing Children (?), The

Nothing indicates that the distinctions made above were in the minds of the evangelists or of Jesus or the early Christian teachers before the evangelists. They have designed their narrative meshalim as fictive, anonymous texts of various shapes without dividing them into different categories. If we ourselves make the divisions, it is for our own analytical purposes.

Apart from the four meshalim of the example type in Luke, the three Gospels show no significant differences from the point of view of main types.

The Use of Contrasts

Operating with contrasts is one of the most common devices of a teacher. It focuses attention on, and sharpens the point to be made in a way which both simplifies and clarifies. This device has, of course, been used as well in the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels.¹

Contrasts may, however, be of different kinds. In our material, I have divided the 55 texts into four groups.

Group one includes narrative meshalim in which a striking, highly stylized contrast marks the meshal in its entirety. We find that 11 out of the 55 are of this type: none in Mark, six in Matthew (The Two Builders, The Two Sons, The Servant in Authority, The Ten Virgins, The Talents, and The Last Judgment), and five in Luke (The Two Builders, The Servant in Authority, The Prodigal Son, The Rich Man and Lazarus, and The Pharisee and the Publican).

Group two consists of narrative meshalim in which the contrast is clear and important without being as dominant or clear-cut as in the former case. Ten out of the 55 are of this type: two in Mark (The Sower, and The Mustard Seed), three in Matthew (The Sower, The Tares, and The Dragnet) and five in Luke (The Two Debtors, The Sower, The Good Samaritan, The Lost Sheep, and The Pounds).

Two Debtors, The Sower (?), The Friend at Midnight (?), The Barren Fig Tree, The Closed Door, The Great Feast, The Lost Son, The Unjust Steward, The Unjust Judge, The Pounds, The Wicked Husbandmen; (c) the remaining narrative meshalim are of a similitude type (with a question-mark for The Tower Builder and The Warring King in Luke), except (d) The Last Judgment in Matthew.

1. Cf. M.D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), pp. 53-55.

Group three includes 14 narrative meshalim containing contrasts that are weaker or confined to some point of detail: none in Mark, nine in Matthew (The Playing Children, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, The Pearl of Great Price, The Lost Sheep, The Unmerciful Servant, The Wicked Husbandmen, and The Great Feast), and five in Luke (The Playing Children, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Wedding Guests, and The Great Feast).

Group four, finally, consists of narrative meshalim without any contrast worth mentioning: the remaining three in Mark, three in Matthew, and 14 in Luke.

This means that we find a deliberate contrast in only two of the five narrative meshalim in Mark, neither of these belonging to group one. Matthew has six from group one, three from group two and nine from group three. Luke has five from group one, five from group two and five from group three. The most important observation is that half the number of narrative meshalim (14 out of 29) in Luke lack any contrast, but only three in Matthew.

Thus the Markan Jesus does not operate often or markedly with contrasts in his narrative meshalim, the Lukan Jesus is as likely to work without as with contrasts, while the Matthaean Jesus almost always makes use of contrasts in texts of this kind.

Commendatory or Censuring Character

The narrative mashal presents in many cases both what is right and what is wrong; we may, for the sake of simplicity, speak of the 'good' and the 'bad' respectively. Both elements are elucidated (not merely mentioned) in more than a third of the total number (20 out of 55): in two cases in Mark, eight in Matthew, and ten in Luke.¹

Nearly half the cases (23 out of 55) either have or elucidate only the 'good' element: three in Mark, six in Matthew, and 14 in Luke.² The

1. In Mark, The Sower, The Wicked Husbandmen; in Matthew, The Playing Children, The Sower, The Dragnet, The Two Sons, The Servant in Authority, The Ten Virgins, The Talents, The Last Judgment; in Luke, The Two Builders, The Playing Children, The Sower, The Good Samaritan, The Servant in Authority, The Wedding Guests, The Prodigal Son, The Rich Man and Lazarus, The Pharisee and the Publican, The Pounds.

2. In Mark, The Seed Growing Secretly, The Mustard Seed, and The Watchful

situation is similar concerning the 'bad' in 11 cases: no narrative mashal in Mark, seven in Matthew, and four in Luke.¹ Seventeen narrative meshalim are completely confined to one of the two elements: two in Mark, six in Matthew, and nine in Luke.² In such cases the narrative is positive ('good'). There is only one exception, The Rich Fool (in Luke).

Thus the narrative meshalim in all three Synoptic Gospels are used both as a commendatory, positive method of teaching (the good is put forward) and as a censuring method, more often in the former way than in the latter. The Gospels show no significant difference in this regard.

The Characters in the Narrative Meshalim

The illustrative material in the narrative meshalim in the Gospels is mainly *anthropomorphic*. The pictures are taken from the world of humans. No narrative mashal takes its illustrative material solely from nature. Something from nature—but always the nature dominated by humans—may at times be included in the comparison, but only in one narrative mashal (The Sower) does this element occupy the central interest, and not even there the total interest.³

The human being in the narrative mashal is a single individual in

Servants; in Matthew, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, The Pearl of Great Price, The Lost Sheep, The Burglar; in Luke, The Two Debtors, The Friend at Midnight, The Watchful Servants, The Burglar, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Tower Builder, The Warring King, The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Unjust Steward, The Servant's Reward, The Unjust Judge, The Wicked Husbandmen.

1. In Matthew, The Playing Children, The Tares, The Unmerciful Servant, The Labourers in the Vineyard, The Wicked Husbandmen, The Great Feast, The Wedding Garment; in Luke, The Rich Fool, The Barren Fig Tree, The Closed Door, The Great Feast.

2. In Mark, The Seed Growing Secretly, The Mustard Seed; in Matthew, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, The Pearl of Great Price, The Lost Sheep, The Burglar; in Luke, The Two Debtors, The Rich Fool, The Watchful Servants, The Burglar, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Lost Coin, The Unjust Steward, The Servant's Reward.

3. A human being, the sower, is part of the central picture even in this mashal. Nature is *part of* the vital imagery in the parable chapter in all the Synoptic Gospels but outside this 'chapter' only in three cases in Luke, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, and The Barren Fig Tree. Cf. 'The Narrative Meshalim', pp. 345-47.

one quarter of the cases (13 out of 55): three in Mark, six in Matthew, and four in Luke. In the other three quarters (42 cases) two or more people appear in the mashal; the illustrative material is, accordingly, in most cases taken from the *social* life of humans.¹

Only necessary characters appear in the narrative, and they are always strongly stylized. Mark has no interest worth mentioning in defining the actors more fully. They are simply human beings. The only professions and classes mentioned are vinedressers and servants in one narrative mashal (The Wicked Husbandmen), and the master of the house, the servants and a door-keeper in another (The Watchful Servants). Attention is focused on what the human actors *do*.

In Matthew as well, the characters of the narrative meshalim are hardly more than actors, a 'man', a 'woman', etc. Labels of profession and class are not numerous. The principal characters of the narratives are few and depicted in broad terms—a king (in four cases), a master of the house (three cases) and a merchant (one case)—and these are demanded by the actions to be depicted. The complexity of social life appears occasionally (The Tares, The Unmerciful Servant); otherwise Matthew does not bring it into his narrative meshalim. The actors are just humans, not professionals.

Luke, on the other hand, specifies the actors more closely in some of his meshalim. He mentions quite a number of human groups, not only different family members but also other social relations, classes and professions, e.g., money-lender, householder, steward, vine-dresser, priest, Levite, innkeeper, judge, constable. He displays society's complexity. Therefore his narrative meshalim reflect civilized society more clearly than do the meshalim of Mark and Matthew. This applies to narrative meshalim peculiar to Luke. The tendency in this direction is hardly noticeable in the narrative meshalim he has in common with the other Synoptics.

Relevant too is the fact that people in the narrative meshalim are hardly ever characterized further with *descriptive adjectives*. Only in one of his five texts does Mark say something about a character with an adjective: the son in the mashal of the Wicked Husbandmen is called 'dear' (ἀγαπητός), nothing more.

Matthew uses some adjectives in his description of characters, but

1. In The Mustard Seed in Mark, the sower is not explicitly mentioned, nor are the fishermen in The Dragnet in Matthew. They are, however, presupposed.

they are few in number. The adjectives which appear more than once in the narrative meshalim are the simple moral words 'good' and 'evil' (ἀγαθός, πονηρός or κακός) or 'wise' and 'foolish' (φρόνιμος, μωρός) as well as 'faithful' (πιστός). The words 'lazy', 'useless' and 'hard' (δκνηρός, ἀχρεῖος, σκληρός) are used once each and in the same mashal (The Talents). All these adjectives classify along moral, not social, lines.

Luke does not display the same formalized use of adjectives in his narrative meshalim. Nor does he divide the actors in the same simple way into 'good' and 'bad'. He never uses the contrast 'wise'–'foolish', and only once 'good and evil'. 'Faithful' appears in two of our texts (The Servant in Authority, and The Pounds). Luke has more adjectives than Matthew, but they are not numerous in his Gospel either. In short, very little is said about the characters of the narrative meshalim in any of the Synoptics with the aid of adjectives.¹

The *feelings* of the characters are almost never indicated, and what they *think* or say to themselves is stated only in eight narrative meshalim; I will return to this point below. The texts give us no insight into the psychology of the actors. This means that the narrative meshalim focus on *behaviour*: they depict the acting characters' attitudes and actions or something that happens. The characters themselves have not attracted attention.

Not a single character in the narrative meshalim of the Gospels is depicted as an individual, idiosyncratic person. None of the figures bears an individual name except Lazarus and he has this name just because he is the typically poor man, God's protégé, and Father Abraham (Lk. 16.19-31). The appearance of none is depicted. None gets an adjective that makes him a unique individual, unlike others. None has a remarkable profession. Thus no character of the narrative meshalim is described as a figure with peculiar individual traits: all characters are without exception *types* or *representatives of a group*, a smaller or a larger group. This applies to all the three Synoptics.

The Utterances in the Narrative Meshalim

Twenty-two out of the 55 narrative meshalim lack speech altogether: four in Mark, nine in Matthew, and nine in Luke. Twenty meshalim

1. Occasionally a characterization is made in some other way: God calls the rich farmer 'Fool!' (ἄφρων) in Lk. 12.20, and the unjust judge is depicted as one who 'neither feared God nor regarded men' in Lk. 18.2, 4.

have one or two utterances, 13 have three to eight. In eight of the 33 cases the characters talk to themselves or think aloud: one in Mark (The Wicked Husbandmen), two in Matthew (The Wicked Husbandmen, and The Servant in Authority), and five in Luke (The Rich Fool, The Servant in Authority, The Prodigal Son, The Unjust Steward, and The Unjust Judge).

The utterances in the narrative meshalim are plain and promote the action. They are not profound, aphoristic sayings of a more general nature. Words of that kind we find sometimes additionally, *after* the narrative, but only exceptionally within the narrative itself, at its end, expressed by one of the principal actors of the story (Mt. 20.15; 25.29, 40 [sic], 45; Lk. 14.24; 15.32; 19.26). Utterances within the narratives are introduced by weak, general verbs of saying: λέγω, φημί, εἶπον, ἐρῶ, ἀποκρίνομαι, διαλέγομαι and διαλογίζομαι appear occasionally, γογγύζω once.

These observations show that the reflection behind the narrative meshalim in the three Synoptic Gospels has not been given to characterizing the actors' thoughts or speeches in more specific ways.

Style

The meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels are presented very tersely. We do not find here the lively and often repetitive language frequently encountered in certain types of popular narrating.¹

The rule of terseness is qualified only by two stylistic characteristics. One of them is rather common: the fondness for word-pairs and parallelistic expressions which is so typical of biblical language. The narrative meshalim in Luke rarely contain instances of *parallelismus membrorum* but very frequently word-pairs and parallelistic expressions. Matthew loves the same devices; in his Gospel we also meet, at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, a most skilfully wrought parallelistic composition even in a narrative mashal (7.24-47); the Lukan parallel has nothing of the sort (6.46-49).

The second characteristic which we find in only a few cases is the presence of certain dramatic repetitions in the narrative, for example, the enumerations of the king's different situations of distress in the mashal of The Last Judgment (Mt. 25.34-44), or the section about the

1. Contra D. Flusser, *Die rabbinischen Gleichnisse und der Gleichniserzähler Jesus*, I (Bern: Lang, 1981), p. 299; cf. 290-91 and 306.

first two servants' accounts in the mashal of The Talents (Mt. 25.20-23), or the penitential words of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15.18-19, 21). Here the text could be shortened with the aid of summarizing words; that would, however, make the narrative more abstract.

Thus there is, in a few cases, a certain tension between terseness and concreteness, but terseness dominates strongly and creates the main impression. The Synoptic narrative mashal is a very concise text.

Some other characteristics of style in these texts are well known. I just mention them: the narrative is simple and sequential, the scenes are never mixed, and in the conversations only two people (or groups) at a time speak to each other ('*szenische Zweiheit*', 'stage duality').¹ So it is in all three Synoptic Gospels.

4. Audience

If Jesus had disciples who were with him and followed him, these were attentive listeners to all his teaching, whomever he was speaking to; this was their prime task. But let us now ask for the specific addressees of the different narrative meshalim according to the Synoptic Gospels.

In Mark, three narrative meshalim are directed to the people (two cases are, however, ambiguous: the disciples?), one is spoken to the disciples, and one to opponents. In Matthew, 11 are spoken to the disciples, one to the people, five to both the disciples and the people, and four to the opponents. In Luke seven are narrated to the disciples, ten to the people, one to both disciples and people, four to opponents, four to 'somebody' or 'some people', one to a lawyer, one to a guest at table, and one to the Pharisee Simon.

To be precise, Mark and Luke connect the narrative meshalim more often with the people than with the disciples, whereas Matthew much more often does the reverse. But the difference is not absolute; none of the evangelists pursues his preference exclusively. And in all the Synoptics, opponents too are met with a narrative mashal on occasion.

A number of narrative meshalim appear in two or three of the Gospels. A comparison gives the following result.

The three narrative meshalim to be found in *all three Synoptics* are The Sower, The Mustard Seed, and The Wicked Husbandmen. The

1. Cf. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, pp. 203-204.

first mentioned is directed to the people in all three Gospels. The remaining two are in Luke spoken to the people. In Mark and Matthew, however, one of them is addressed to both the people and the disciples, the other to opponents.

Matthew and Luke have seven or eight in common. Four of them (The Two Builders, The Playing Children, The Burglar, and, in part, The Leaven) have the same audience in both. The Lost Sheep is directed to the disciples in Matthew, to opponents in Luke; The Servant in Authority to the disciples in Matthew, to one of the disciples (Peter) in Luke. The Talents is presented to the disciples in Matthew, The Pounds probably to the people in Luke.

Additionally, *Mark and Luke* have one more in common, The Watchful Servants. It is spoken to the people in both Gospels.

To sum up, one must say about the narrative meshalim found in two or three of the Gospels that the evangelists on the whole identify the audience to which they are spoken in a similar way. But the evangelists were not at all tied down in this respect; the audience is by no means unalterably defined.

5. Framing

Phenomena so common as metaphor and narrative are naturally used in many different ways. Some of these, however, are more common than others. Regarding the narrative meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels, it is pervasive and characteristic that they do not appear as naked, independent narratives which on their own present their message in a purely and exclusively narrative form. It cannot be said that the Synoptic narrative meshalim simply are themselves the message. That is the case with only one of these meshalim, the example story about the Rich Man and Lazarus in Lk. 16.19-31—one single pericope out of 55.¹

All the other narrative meshalim in the Gospels are part of a text containing elements of other kinds as well. In this investigation, the narrative meshalim must therefore be interpreted *as parts of a*

1. We could, perhaps, say the same thing about The Last Judgment in Mt. 25.31-46, but the decisive words about 'the least of these my brethren' in vv. 40 and 45 cannot be characterized just as mere elements of the narrative; they are aphoristic meshalim at the same time.

pericope. They are not isolated entities, they do not stand freely on their own feet.¹

Still, the narrative itself is normally kept intact from beginning to end. Accompanying materials ('accessories') appear before and/or after the body of the narrative.

There are exceptions, however, most of them in Luke. Non-narrative elements have been incorporated in the narrative body in nine narrative meshalim: one in Mark (The Wicked Husbandmen), two in Matthew (The Wicked Husbandmen, and The Servant in Authority) and six in Luke (The Watchful Servants, The Servant in Authority, The Defendant, The Closed Door, The Pharisee and the Publican, and The Wicked Husbandmen).

In these cases the narrative itself is not unbroken but integrated in the argument of the teaching—or should we put it the other way around? The story is penetrated by one or several non-narrative elements: a direct address to the listeners, some questioning or argumentative element, a comment, an exhortation or a declaration. In several of these cases the message and the picture are strongly interwoven; the mashal walks on the borderline of straightforward teaching.

In seven other pericopes, most of them in Luke even in this case, the narrative mashal has the character of a *question*: one in both Matthew and Luke (The Lost Sheep) and five others peculiar to Luke (The Friend at Midnight, The Tower Builder, The Warring King, The Lost Coin, and The Servant's Reward).

In these seven cases the mashal has been formed as an elaborate, narrative question with an answer or declaration. No other non-narrative elements have been included, apart from 'I tell you . . .' in The Friend at Midnight. For the rest the narrative itself is kept intact, once it has begun. The Lukan tendency of mixing other elements with the narrative should be noted.

1. In the Synoptic Gospels, there are—in addition to the context—11 different types of accessories to the narrative meshalim (before, after or within the narrative body); see my article 'The Narrative Meshalim in the Old Testament Books and in the Synoptic Gospels', in *To Touch the Text: Festschrift J.A. Fitzmyer* (ed. M.P. Horgan and P.J. Kobelski; New York: Crossroad, 1989), pp. 296-98.

6. Function

What function do the narrative meshalim fulfil within their pericopes? These meshalim almost always serve to *compare*. Jesus elucidates the matter he is discussing by resorting to a comparison. This is in almost half the cases said explicitly with a word or a phrase at the beginning: ὁμοιος in 12 (Matthew 7 times, Luke 5 times), ὁμοιοῦν in ten (Mark 1, Matthew 6, Luke 3), ὥσπερ or ὡς in four cases (Mark 3, Matthew 1).¹ With this phrase the comparison is mostly indicated in a very general way. The comparison is more specifically expressed in those narrative meshalim which are followed by an interpretation or application (οὕτως, λέγω ὑμῖν, etc.), sometimes in the form of a statement, in plain speech, of the content of the mashal (e.g. The Playing Children). After the narrative mashal Jesus returns to his subject.

Why is the comparison made, what purpose does it fulfil? Without forcing the evidence it can be said that all 55 narrative meshalim fulfil the function of *making something clearer*, illuminating it. The formulation of the ancient rhetoricians *apertius dicere*, 'say something more clearly', is pertinent in every case, even in the parable chapter. It is also appropriate to say, in most cases, that the mashal *conveys a concrete picture of something*, illustrates it. That certainly was what the rhetoricians meant with the formula *ante oculos ponere*, 'put something before the eyes'.² If one wants to indicate briefly the primary function of a narrative mashal in the Synoptic Gospels, one can thus say that it is designed to make a matter more clear and concrete. That is the basic function.

The mashal is thus intended to help the listener *understand*. The understanding aimed at is, however, not merely an intellectual comprehension. The narrative mashal is also meant to bring the listeners

1. ὁμοιος: Mt. 11.16; 13.31, 33, 44, 45, 47; 20.1; Lk. 6.47 (48, 49); 7.31 (32); 12.36; 13.18 (19), 21; ὁμοιοῦν: Mk 4.30; Mt. 7.24 (26); 11.16; 13.24; 18.23; 22.2; 25.1; Lk. 7.31; 13.18, 20; ὡς: Mk 4.26, 31; 13.34; ὥσπερ: Mt. 25.14.

2. In the rhetorical textbook *Ad Herennium* (probably c. 80 BC), it is said about the 'parable' (*similitudo*) that it is used to embellish the presentation (*ornandi causa*), or to prove something (*probandi*), or to say something more clearly (*apertius dicendi*), or to put something before the eyes of the audience (*ante oculos ponendi*) (4.45.58–49.63 [45.59]). We can easily imagine other *possible* ways of use; comparisons serve many different roles in language. See further my article, 'If We Do not Cut the Parables out of their Frames', *NTS* 37 (1991), pp. 321–35.

to *agreement* (*Einverständnis*) and even to action. It will awaken an insight which demands to be put into practice, a *motivating* insight.

Different secondary aims may be added to the ones mentioned in certain cases, e.g., *exhortation*, *paraenesis*, *defence* or *attack*, but these always represent additional aims.¹

To summarize: the narrative meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels fulfil the function of *illuminating and making concrete* a matter, and this in order to *make the listeners understand and agree*. This is their composite basic purpose, and it corresponds perfectly with the words in the interpretation of the mashal of the Sower in Matthew (13.23): the right listener not only hears the word (ἀκούειν), he also understands what it is all about (συνιέναι) and consequently bears fruit in action (καρποφορεῖν, ποιεῖν).

This means that the narrative meshalim of the Gospels have an *instrumental* function. One may say that they are teaching *material* but above all teaching *tools*.

7. Message

What subjects are the narrative meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels used to clarify? My account must be brief. The subject of the mashal is indicated very generally in some of the pericopes, more precisely in others. The subjects of all the narrative meshalim are covered by the wide umbrella-term 'The Rule/Kingdom of God/Heaven' (ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ/τῶν οὐρανῶν), provided this expression is taken in a broad, not one-sidedly futural sense.²

It is well known that the introductory formula, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is like . . .' is very vague. (In what follows I will use the

1. 'The Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels', pp. 351-55. See also my article, 'If We Do not Cut', p. 328.

2. 'The Narrative Meshalim', pp. 360-62. In our material 'The Kingdom of God' is connected with The Seed Growing Secretly, and The Mustard Seed in Mark; The Two Sons (in the interpretation) in Matthew; The Mustard Seed, and The Leaven in Luke; 'The Kingdom of Heaven' with The Tares, The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, The Pearl of Great Price, The Dragnet, The Unmerciful Servant, The Labourers in the Vineyard, The Great Feast, and The Ten Virgins in Matthew; and 'The Kingdom' with The Last Judgment, and The Sower (in the interpretation) in Matthew. The three expressions have, in my opinion, the same meaning.

expression 'the Kingdom' for the sake of simplicity.) 'The Kingdom' is never defined in our material, nor does any narrative mashal elucidate directly what the expression itself means. The cited formula only indicates the domain within which the message of the mashal lies; it does not say what specific point the speaker is about to elucidate. It is, however, only in *The Mustard Seed*, *The Leaven*, *The Treasure*, and *The Pearl* that this introduction is not complemented by other accessories, calculated to bring out the meaning of the mashal more specifically.

According to Mark

A. Three of Mark's five narrative meshalim appear in the so-called parable chapter: *The Sower*, *The Seed Growing Secretly*, and *The Mustard Seed*. They elucidate:

1. how the word of the Kingdom is received, in three cases without fruit, in one with rich fruit;
2. how the Kingdom comes of itself in its time (one need only have patience); and
3. how the growth of the Kingdom irresistibly reaches its consummation once the process has been set in motion. All three treat both God's 'ways'—how he carries his plans through—and the reactions of the human beings involved. These three texts are mystery meshalim.

B. Outside the parable chapter, *The Wicked Husbandmen* elucidates the unfaithfulness of the Jewish leaders and God's punishment and rejection of them, and *The Watchful Servants* how the leaders of Christ's waiting followers must fulfil their duties and be prepared for the Parousia.

C. To summarize: the three narrative meshalim in the parable chapter illuminate their subject and make it concrete but they have a mystery-revealing character as well. They are not very strongly paraenetic. *The Wicked Husbandmen* is polemical and condemnatory. The final mashal is one of positive admonition. God's abundant grace is not especially stressed in the five texts.

According to Matthew

A. The first and basic of the seven mystery meshalim in the parable chapter treats the reception of the word of the Kingdom. The Tares (no. 2) explains the presence of the impious among the people of God: whence they come, why God lets them remain and when they are going to be cleared away. The Dragnet (no. 7) has almost the same theme: the gathering into the Kingdom is general but a division will be made at the final judgment. The Mustard Seed and The Leaven clarify why martyrdom is demanded for the sake of the Kingdom. The Hidden Treasure and The Pearl of Great Price explain why people can sacrifice all that they have for the Kingdom.¹

The seven narrative meshalim in ch. 13 have their own character. They illuminate and make concrete without being (explicitly) exhortative at the same time, and they treat μυστήρια (v. 11), not general, 'public' questions about the Kingdom.

B. Leaving the parable chapter, we find that some of the remaining narrative meshalim clarify and give a rationale for the fact that God now opens the Kingdom for the small, the weak and the lost (easily widened to include the Gentiles): The Great Feast, The Labourers in the Vineyard, and certainly also The Two Sons, and The Lost Sheep.

Israel's reluctance to receive God's messengers is taken up in The Playing Children. The impenitence shown by Israel's leaders is illuminated and condemned in The Wicked Husbandmen. The murmuring of the law-abiding at the fact that the Kingdom is now offered so generously to all is illustrated and refuted in The Labourers in the Vineyard.

The demand for obedience in practice—not only an appropriate status, hearing or confession—returns in several meshalim: The Two Builders (where the words of *Jesus* are to be obeyed), The Two Sons, The Wedding Garment, The Servant in Authority (especially the duties of leaders), The Ten Virgins (perhaps), The Talents (the duties of the rank and file), and The Last Judgment.

Duties towards the 'little ones' are treated (in Matthew just clarified and justified, not defended as they are in Luke) in The Lost Sheep. The duty of forgiving one's co-servants is elucidated in The

1. See further my article, 'The Seven Parables in Matthew XIII', *NTS* 19 (1972–73), pp. 16–37.

Unmerciful Servant (even if this mashal first of all elucidates the limits of God's forgiveness).

The importance of penitence and permanent watchfulness in view of the approaching Parousia is inculcated in the three connected meshalim of The Burglar, The Servant in Authority, and The Ten Virgins.

The Parousia ('Coming') and the judgment are in view in about half the Matthaean narrative meshalim: The Two Builders (probably), The Tares, The Dragnet, The Unmerciful Servant (perhaps), The Wicked Husbandmen, The Great Feast, The Wedding Garment, The Burglar, The Servant in Authority, The Ten Virgins, The Talents, and The Last Judgment. This includes the last eight narrative meshalim in Matthew, and, in addition, four (or at least two) dispersed ones. It should be noted that *condemnation* is emphasized—in a few cases only indicated—in all these eight texts except The Burglar; it is a typically Matthaean concern.

C. To summarize: in Matthew the narrative meshalim respond to questions occasioned by the present situation of salvation history. Mostly they treat what is just now taking place—including the present teaching from God to his people—or will happen soon; their message is, however, not at all dated (see below).

It should be observed in this connection that the seven narrative meshalim in the parable chapter have a character of their own. They treat—all of them—*μυστήρια* of the Kingdom (13.11), while other narrative meshalim all concern more general truths about the Kingdom.

It is striking that, apart from the parable chapter, so many of the narrative meshalim in Matthew serve the function of exhortative teaching. The narrative text is, of course, illuminating and making concrete, but in its context and together with its accessories it too takes on a paraenetic function. Almost all of these meshalim elucidate primarily God's (or Christ's) *demands* upon his people; duties which are now inescapable in view of the judgment. But only one narrative mashal treats more *concrete* duties (The Last Judgment); otherwise we hear only about general, basic duties and duties in principle. The Matthaean narrative mashal does not deal with individual 'works of the law'. It is haggadic, not halakic—if we can use these terms.

In half of the narrative meshalim, God's (Christ's) generous and purposeful activity is also elucidated (The Sower, The Playing

Children, The Lost Sheep, The Labourers in the Vineyard, The Wicked Husbandmen, The Great Feast, and the last four narrative meshalim), but it should be noted that only the mashal of the Lost Sheep treats *primarily* God's mercy and actions of grace.

According to Luke

Luke has more narrative meshalim than the others and also the greatest breadth with regard to content.

A. In Luke, the parable chapter (8.4-18) has only one narrative mashal, The Sower. It is shorter and more stylized than in Mark or even in Matthew but has the same main content, apart from the fact that Luke has hardly perceived its learned aspects.¹ The Sower is about the reception of the message of the Kingdom.

B. The generous offer of the Kingdom to those who are lost is illuminated and *defended* in The Great Feast, The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Prodigal Son, and in The Two Debtors as well. The last three of these meshalim are peculiar to Luke. The Mustard Seed and The Leaven clarify why martyrdom for the Kingdom is necessary.

Ten narrative meshalim (one third) elucidate death, the Parousia or the judgment and how one should act in view of them: The Two Builders, The Rich Fool, The Watchful Servants, The Burglar, The Servant in Authority, The Defendant, The Barren Fig Tree (these latter six appearing in succession), and finally The Closed Door, The Unjust Steward, and The Pounds.

The twin meshalim of the Tower Builder and the Warring King² are both about the necessity of facing the exacting demands of discipleship before undertaking it. The Wedding Guests, and The Pharisee and the Publican elucidate the need to humble oneself before God. The simple duty of serving God without calculation is taken up in The Servant's Reward, and hearing and doing (practising) in The Two Builders, and The Good Samaritan.

1. See my article, 'The Parable of the Sower and its Interpretation', *NTS* 14 (1967-68), pp. 182-84. In Luke the mashal only speaks of a hundredfold fruit (8.8). This is certainly an abbreviation, made by Luke and occasioned by the fact that in Mark (and Matthew) the figures 30, 60 and 100 are not explained in the interpretation (cf. Mk 4.8 and 20; Mt. 13.8 and 23); thus they are not needed. Cf. p. 303 note 1.

2. They are not totally parallel, however, not one-egg twins.

Earnest prayer is clarified and illustrated in *The Friend at Midnight*, and *The Unjust Judge*. Stubborn and hardened Israel is censured in *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, its leaders in *The Wicked Husbandmen*. The protests of the righteous against the generosity of the gospel are met in *The Lost Sheep*, *The Lost Coin*, and *The Prodigal Son*.

C. To summarize: in Luke as well the narrative meshalim deal with what Jesus insists on elsewhere: the need to consider the seriousness of the time and act wisely in the current crisis (in view of the Parousia, judgment or death), repent, humble oneself, accept the Gospel of the Kingdom, be earnest in prayer, etc. Specific duties are never at stake, even less halakic minutiae, only general obligations. We also find defence of the generous message for the lost, blame against Israel and words of judgment against its leaders, as well as teaching about the conditions of discipleship. The perspective is as a rule less eschatological than in the narrative meshalim in Matthew and condemnation does not play the same role here as in Matthew.

How many narrative meshalim are about our duties? Almost all of them are, in the first place, even if most of them elucidate God's action at the same time. I think in fact that only four of our meshalim deal *primarily* with God: *The Lost Sheep*, *The Lost Coin*, *The Prodigal Son*, and *The Great Feast*. All four stress God's grace and purposeful action.

Jesus in the Narrative Meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels

In general, no character in the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels represents Jesus. But there are exceptions. The Son of Man appears in a number of meshalim, the Son in one.

What is elucidated in these texts about Jesus? His teaching is mentioned in *The Closed Door* (Luke). If the Sower is primarily Jesus himself, then his teaching is treated in that mashal as well (Mark, Matthew, Luke). He is the beloved Son, who is rejected and killed (not crucified) in *The Wicked Husbandmen* (Mark, Matthew, Luke); perhaps he also is the king's son *mentioned* in *The Great Feast* in Matthew. His resurrection is presumably alluded to in *The Rich Man and Lazarus* (Luke). His imminent Parousia ('Coming') and judgment are illuminated in quite a number of narrative meshalim (e.g. in Mt. 24–25). His generosity toward sinners is strongly reflected in our

texts, especially in Luke, for example, The Lost Sheep (even in Matthew), The Lost Coin, and The Prodigal Son, but here it is not so much Jesus' character that is depicted as the point of his message and appearance, something which even his representatives stand for.

The narrative meshalim of the Gospels show a prophetic character but even more the character of religious *wisdom*.¹ It is worth observing that these texts do not take up and illuminate the fact that, for example, in the Antitheses, the demands of Jesus are particularly exacting, radical and absolute, though, to be sure, the necessity of martyrdom is elucidated in The Mustard Seed, and The Leaven (Matthew, Luke), and the disciple's task is painted as difficult in The Warring King (Luke). A reaction of astonishment like the objection in Mt. 19.10 is not followed by a narrative mashal in the Gospels.

To sum up, the narrative meshalim are not normally about Jesus, but when we get a glimpse of him in these texts, he appears as a messenger, prophet and teacher sent by God, and representative of God, with a graceful and generous attitude to human beings, being once, as the beloved Son, refused and killed. Perhaps, in one mashal, he is also the King's son, whose eschatological wedding is approaching. But above all he is the coming final Judge, especially in Matthew. His exorcistic and healing activity is not reflected, nor any other of his mighty acts, nor his crucifixion, nor his resurrection, with one probable exception. And the *person* of Jesus is nowhere directly elucidated in these texts.

Actualization

In their present form, the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels were usable in the teaching of early Christianity and have, in many

1. There was in Israel also a wisdom of a common, mundane type. The Synoptic Jesus does not take up such wisdom but rather that with the motto, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. 9.10); cf. G. von Rad, *Weisheit in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), pp. 75-101. M. Hengel ('Jesus als messianischer Lehrer der Weisheit und die Anfänge der Christologie', in *Sagesse et religion: Colloque de Strasbourg, Octobre 1976* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979], pp. 148-89), and R. Riesner (*Jesus als Lehrer: Eine Untersuchung zum Ursprung der Evangelien-Überlieferung* [3rd edn; Tübingen: Mohr, 1988]) characterize the earthly Jesus as a 'Messianic Teacher of Wisdom'. This is a very proper characterization of the master behind the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels.

cases, been worked over and 'actualized' there, 'updated'. The perspective is clearly post-Paschal in quite a number of them. But the majority of them had a form and a content that made them useful to early Christian teachers and to the evangelists without much modernization. Their message to people around the earthly Jesus was adequate to people in the early Christian communities as well. Such meshalim are pre-Paschal equally well as post-Paschal. (And much reinterpretation can be done without reformulating the actual text.)

In Mark it is not easy to see whether the text of the narrative meshalim has been altered after Easter or not. The Watchful Servants has certainly been reworked, perhaps also The Wicked Husbandmen, but hardly the three in the parable chapter.

In Matthew the interpretation of The Tares and of The Dragnet certainly reveal post-Paschal views, but not the narrative bodies themselves. So does, however, The Great Feast, and, of course, the last four Parousia meshalim; perhaps also The Wicked Husbandmen. But the narrative text of the remaining ones may reflect the time of Jesus' earthly ministry equally well as the time of the early Church. (Some small adjustments may have been necessary at times, of course, but these are hardly worth searching for.)

In Luke a number of narrative meshalim are rather timeless, not defined to any extent by a specific situation of salvation history. I am thinking of The Wedding Guests, The Pharisee and the Publican, The Servant's Reward, The Good Samaritan, and The Friend at Midnight. Several other narrative meshalim inculcate the necessity of repentance and wise action in view of death and judgment. Among these, some are pronounced Parousia meshalim: The Watchful Servants, The Burglar, The Servant in Authority, The Closed Door, and The Pounds. Here the post-Paschal perspectives are obvious. Perhaps The Rich Man and Lazarus should be assigned to this group as well. But it is hardly possible to find more examples than these.

Conclusion

The narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels have been 'actualized' on their way from Jesus to the evangelists' Gospels. But the alterations of the texts do not seem to have been very great. The more developed theological topics and terms of early Christianity have not entered the narrative meshalim noticeably. These texts have fulfilled the purpose of clarifying and illustrating the conditions of the Kingdom, making

the listeners familiar with them, understanding of them and willing to live accordingly. This aim of the teaching made most of them equally pertinent throughout the passing decades. Both the actual question which provoked the narrative *meshal* and the answer given remained pertinent.

It should be noted that the *frames* which early Christianity has preserved for some narrative *meshalim* in the Gospels rarely or never depict a historical *situation*, properly speaking; what they present is rather the *problem* arising in a certain situation. That makes every attempt to reconstruct the concrete historical situation of origin of a certain *meshal* rather illusory.

The unchanged relevance is understandable especially since these small texts elucidate rather pervasively *our* duties first of all, and *basic* duties, not specific ones. The listener close to God's heart is the one who hears, understands what the message is all about and, accordingly, bears fruit in practice (Mt. 13.23; cf. the more general wordings of Mk 4.20 and Lk. 8.15). This was the ideal before Easter equally well as after it.

8. *Margins of Variation Shown by the Parallels*

We have interesting material for our work on the question of how much freedom early Christianity may have felt in altering the narrative *meshalim* in the Jesus tradition: the examples rendered by two or three of the Synoptics. How great are the variations which these parallels show?

Mark-Matthew-Luke

The three Synoptics have three narrative *meshalim* in common: The Sower, The Mustard Seed, and The Wicked Husbandmen. In all three cases, minor differences show that the teachers and evangelists felt free to interfere in the wording of the received text. The Matthaean and Lukan versions, very similar to each other, are more compact than the Markan one. The Matthaean version of the first and the third of these *meshalim* shows more tendencies in the direction of allegory than do the parallel versions. The interferences have, however, not been great; no one can doubt that we meet the same three *meshalim* in three Gospels.

Matthew–Luke

Matthew and Luke have, in addition, seven other narrative meshalim in common, and perhaps an eighth (The Talents/Pounds).

The Two Builders is in Luke a narrative divided into a ‘good’ and a ‘bad’ part. In Matthew the two parts have been made parallel throughout; the narrative has become poetry. In spite of this strong formal reworking, the point of the mashal has not been changed at all.

In Matthew’s and Luke’s versions of The Leaven—and of The Mustard Seed as well—the narrative body is almost identical; the differences are very minor. The same applies to The Playing Children (in which narrative and interpretation are equally beautiful), The Burglar, and The Servant in Authority; the versions show but slight stylistic variations.

The Lost Sheep is presented with the same elements in the two versions but they are slightly differently formulated; in Luke the sister mashal of The Lost Coin has influenced the end of the narrative. Moreover, in the interpretation, the accent is different: the shepherd’s care is in the forefront in Matthew, his joy in Luke.

In The Great Feast, a common basic plot has been worked out in two rather different ways. The Lukan version is somewhat sketchy and composite; the Matthaean version is very strictly shaped, with regard to form as well as to content.

Moving to The Talents in Matthew and The Pounds in Luke, we find that a distinct mashal motif has been developed so dissimilarly that it seems more appropriate to consider the two texts as two different meshalim than as one in two versions. But the main point and a couple of subsidiary points are the same. The example shows that the freedom for reworking and creating could at times be considerable.

Mark–Luke

Mark and Luke have also The Watchful Servants in common. In this case a traditional mashal has been given two rather different shapes. However, this narrative seems to have been short and loosely structured from the beginning, not even an unmixed narrative. It must have invited free adaptation. In Matthew, three other meshalim (The Servant in Authority, The Ten Virgins, and The Talents) have obviously made it superfluous.

Overview

The characteristics of the different Gospels are noticeable even in the outer form of their narrative meshalim. In Mark the narration is more lively and less compact than in the other two Gospels. In Matthew the presentation is stylized forcefully for didactic reasons and with the interpretation and application of the text in mind; Matthew also loves contrasts. Luke narrates briefly but fluently and with variations—with more literary flair. As a rule, his interferences in the texts have been motivated by stylistic reasons rather than with regard to interpretation and application.

How great is the constancy and how broad the margin of variation as to wording and content? Briefly, we can say that the narrative meshalim to be found in two or three of the Synoptics are in every single case, except one, so similar that there cannot be the slightest doubt about their identity. The parallels are parallels. They have the same plot and the same basic structure. They have not had a floating form; too much of the wording is identical. But minor differences reveal at the same time that some freedom to vary the formulations a little was felt. Occasionally, even the main point of a narrative mashal has been shifted. The dissimilarities are, however, not greater than different contemporary interpretations of a single Old Testament text.

Hardly any characteristic is exclusively the property of one Gospel. In Mark, Matthew and Luke the material has been developed in three somewhat different directions: the accents are put somewhat differently, but they all only develop tendencies already present in the tradition they have received.¹ The character of the differences is best explained as *deliberate alterations of rather firm texts*.

However, there is certainly a *literary* connection between the three Synoptic Gospels. I think Matthew and Luke have had access to the Gospel of Mark; some scholars think differently but most of them assume notwithstanding a literary relation of dependence.² Therefore we cannot be sure to what extent the variations between their parallels were introduced by the evangelists at the level of their editorial work

1. *Contra* Goulder, *Midrash and Lektion*, pp. 47-65, who absolutizes the differences between the three Synoptics.

2. B. Reicke's book *The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) is to my knowledge the most consistent attempt to show that the Synoptic Gospels have only an oral prehistory. Reicke deals very little with the 'parables'.

with written Gospel texts, and to what extent they were made earlier, during the process of transmission. For my part, however, I have not found any indications that the evangelists were more radical or less radical (from our point of view) than the early Christian teachers before them, or that the variety became greater or lesser at the first literary stage than it was at the oral stage. In any case, it is hard to decide. We have a problem here.

9. *The Transmission*

It is now time for broadening our discussion and asking: in what way have the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels been transmitted? What conclusions can be drawn, with regard to this question, from the facts and observations I have presented above? Let us take this group of problems step by step.

Conclusions from the Preserved Text Material

The material is taken over. The fact that so much material is common to the three Synoptics—and homogeneous material, relatively speaking, with very similar parallel versions—shows that the three evangelists pass on something they have taken over. If each one of them had wanted to write a book of his own, the accord would not have been so large and conspicuous.

It is also worth considering that neither Mark nor Matthew says a word about himself or his own authorial effort. Luke does, in his two prologues, but then he also says that he builds upon genuine and reliable tradition from 'eyewitnesses and servants of the word' (Lk. 1.1-4).

Place within the material. The narrative meshalim belong exclusively to the *sayings-material* of the early Christian Jesus tradition; they were obviously transmitted as a part of Jesus' verbal teaching, not within some general narration about Jesus. The *narrative Jesus tradition* was distinct from the narrative meshalim.

The narrative meshalim have been used individually, or, occasionally, in pairs. When in Matthew and twice in Luke several narrative meshalim are put together, then the compilations are clearly secondary. The tract of seven parables that has been broken up and

incorporated in Matthew 13 has its own history.¹

Sitz im Leben. The evangelists reveal consistently and unanimously that the narrative meshalim were not regarded and transmitted as material for elementary proclamation or summarizing. They had their place within the realm of *teaching* (using the word in a broad sense). They were used in order to explain problems more carefully. A Markan phrase (4.2) could be generalized: 'He taught them many things in meshalim, and in his teaching (διδάχῃ) he said to them. . . '

Character. The narrative meshalim belonged to the teaching material. But they can also, and even better, be characterized as teaching *tools*. They fulfilled a subsidiary function: to make the message clear and concrete, help the listeners see and understand, and motivate them to put their insights into practice.

To some extent the narrative meshalim in the parable chapter occupy an exceptional position: these texts also *reveal mysteries* of the Kingdom.

Traditionists. The fact that the Synoptic narrative meshalim are at home so consistently in teaching must mean that their main bearers were the disciples of Jesus at the beginning, and after them the early Christian *teachers* (διδάσκαλοι).² However, teaching in a broader sense was not exclusively carried out by 'teachers' (note, e.g., Col. 3.16).

The narrative form. The shape of the narrative meshalim shows that they are almost always designed to serve a specific, unified purpose, to elucidate *one single matter* (which may at times be composite).³ This

1. 'The Seven Parables'.

2. Cf. my book *The Gospel Tradition* (Lund: Gleerup, 1986), pp. 28-30 and *passim*. A basic historical question is whether the activity of the twelve, their 'ministry of the Word' (διακονία τοῦ λόγου, Acts 6.4), during their period in Jerusalem, included proper teaching (cf. the designation ὑπηρεταί τοῦ λόγου in Lk. 1.2). I think it did. With regard to the early Christian teachers, cf. A.F. Zimmermann, *Die urchristlichen Lehrer* (Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd edn, 1988).

3. The Sower is, e.g., not a proper allegory, even if it has one main point and four clear sub-points; see 'The Parable of the Sower', and cf. 'The Seven Parables', pp. 25-26. The Tares treats three main questions (*The Gospel Tradition*, pp. 20-21, 28-30).

is clear from their concentrated form and terseness. The narrator runs quickly towards his goal. Surroundings and incidental circumstances must not detain him. Metaphors and formulations are strongly stylized: the actors are few and never unique individuals, always types; hardly anything is said to characterize them, hardly anything about their feelings or thinking, just what they do or what happens; the utterances are plain, calculated to promote the action of the narrative. The short narratives are mostly tools with one deliberate didactic aim, to illuminate and make concrete something the teacher wants his listeners to understand (συνιέναι).¹

Variability. This makes us suspect that the narrative meshalim would be presented in a leisurely *style*. And in fact, this seems to have been the case. Their Greek linguistic form is more idiomatic than the language of the aphoristic meshalim; they contain very few Semitisms. Thus the narrative meshalim have been retold more freely than brief pregnant aphorisms and proverbs normally are, in which the single word is more essential.²

This linguistic characteristic indicates that the narrative meshalim of the Gospels have been used without overscrupulousness with regard to their wording. The fact that Matthew has felt free to make so many narrative meshalim contrasting, while, in his narrative meshalim, Luke has rather softened the contrasts, points in the same direction.

There are a number of narrative meshalim peculiar to one evangelist: one in Mark, 11 (or 10) in Matthew, 18 (or 17) in Luke. The differences between these three groups of meshalim show, I think, that early Christianity has felt itself entitled to rework some of the Master's texts and even formulate new narrative meshalim, created in the spirit and style of Jesus, and also to put them in the mouth of Jesus.³ Each of the three streams of tradition reveals even in this case

1. This concentration on one specific question may give us a simple explanation of the fact that the narrative meshalim are so rarely alluded to in the New Testament letters. The reach of the single narrative mashal was limited.

2. See M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1967), pp. 61-69; cf. pp. 274-77. 'The parables. . . are not literal renderings but something more of the nature of literary reproductions of the Aramaic story' (p. 64).

3. I take Mt. 13.51-52 as an indication of this; see 'The Narrative Meshalim', p. 362.

a certain peculiarity. Here, the freedom of re-working (sometimes creating) seems to have been considerable. This especially applies to the *Lukan* tradition. We notice in Luke that professions from the milieu around the early Christian communities are reflected in a way that has few equivalents in Mark and Matthew. The theory of a *Lukan Sonderquelle* can hardly provide a sufficient explanation of that.

It is tempting to venture a guess. The longest and most 'novelistic' narrative meshalim are presumably most likely to be secondary. However, this rule hardly has a general application and I will not press it.

If we compare our material with the narrative meshalim in the Old Testament, intertestamental and rabbinic literature, we can see that it is rather homogeneous. This homogeneity makes it on the whole very difficult to decide if a narrative mashal has been created by Jesus himself or by a disciple. I cannot discuss the problem of genuineness now; let me just say that it would certainly be an unreasonable oversimplification to regard all narrative meshalim peculiar to one evangelist as secondary.¹ Most observations made above would indicate that the secondary narrative meshalim are few.

Be that as it may, many traits show that the early Christian teachers have not normally reworked very radically the narrative meshalim they received. I will mention some indications.

1. In our narrative meshalim very little is said about the characters with the aid of adjectives. This is most easily explained as a sign that they were originally formulated in Hebrew or Aramaic. Both these languages were poor in adjectives. We can notice in the Greek Gospels that Luke has introduced some adjectives in narrative meshalim peculiar to him, but they are not numerous. Mark describes only one character in his narrative meshalim with an adjective. Matthew has very few adjectives and it is easy to discern the Hebrew and Aramaic words behind them. This ought to mean that the narrative meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels have not been reformulated very much. It also shows that when new meshalim were created, this was done in the same style as the traditional ones had.

2. The fact that the verbs of saying within our narrative meshalim are so simple and colourless corresponds to the ancient Hebrew and

1. *Contra* Goulder, *Midrash and Lektion*, pp. 47-65.

Aramaic way of narrating. This is another sign, I suppose, that these meshalim have not been translated and reformulated very freely.

3. When we compare the different versions of the narrative meshalim to be found in two or three of the Synoptic Gospels, we notice on the one hand that the teachers and evangelists have felt free to alter the wording, on the other hand that the alterations normally are rather minor. The plot and the structure of the narrative have not been changed, and even the wording is largely retained. The impression is that the texts have been preserved faithfully but without overscrupulousness. The model is more like the attitude of a targumist than that of a copyist of the meticulous type. One case (The Talents/Pounds) reveals, however, great freedom of reformulating and new creation, another (The Great Feast) considerable freedom. These two examples warn us against excluding such possibilities in single instances.

4. It seems probable that the Synoptic Gospels were written in communities outside Palestine and in *cities*. Yet their illustrative material is almost exclusively taken from the countryside. Indisputable exceptions are few, granted that numbers and proportions have become larger, especially in Matthew,¹ and that a series of professionals have been introduced in many meshalim peculiar to Luke, who displays the greatest creativity. This is one more sign that the alterations have not been radical.

5. The fact that so little of the more developed theological topics and language of the early Church has entered the narrative meshalim of the Gospels is also worth recalling in this connection. The original style has been kept.

Thus our texts do not at all give us the impression that early Christianity had a store of narrative raw material floating in form, from which teachers created meshalim in a shape varying from case to case. The model of popular oral epic, now often called 'Orality',² is here not adequate. Nor do we meet the great variability which is reflected in the Gospel of John. The main impression our material

1. *Contra* Goulder, *Midrash and Lektion*, pp. 47-65. The king was a well-known literary figure, and a rich man need not live in a city.

2. Cf. W.H. Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). On the innumerable different forms oral traditions can take, see Ø. Andersen's paper in this volume.

gives us is that the teachers of the early Church have, despite their didactic freedom, treated our narrative meshalim as texts, texts susceptible of a certain reformulation but yet fixed in form. A mashal is, after all, a text.

Conclusions from the Messages of the Texts

Development towards allegorization. As to the message of our texts, my overall impression is twofold. On the one hand, during the time between Jesus and the evangelists, the Church started utilizing the details of the narrative meshalim more than the original intention seems to have been; the short texts with their focused point began to develop in the direction of rich allegories, for example, The Wicked Husbandmen, and The Tares in Matthew. On the other hand, this development had not yet advanced very far at the time of the evangelists. I do not think a single narrative mashal in the Synoptic Gospels is a proper allegory. The majority of these meshalim in the Gospels show that even at this time the Church was sensitive to the fact that the narrative meshalim were teaching *tools* rather than teaching *material*. Even according to the evangelists, Jesus uses the narrative mashal to illuminate and illustrate one specific topic (note, e.g., Lk. 16.8; 18.1). The topic may be composite sometimes, however (e.g. The Sower, and The Tares). And it may be accentuated differently by different traditionists and expositors. The best example is Lk. 16.1-13, where a number of traditional applications are listed in vv. 8-13. The new narrative meshalim, which the early Church has felt free to formulate, have, on the whole, the same characteristics.¹

Constancy and alterations. All the themes of the Synoptic narrative meshalim are covered by the umbrella-term 'The Rule/Kingdom of God/Heaven'. This appellation need not appear in the text. The fact that in our pericopes Mark and Luke have this summary appellation only twice each, while Matthew has it 13 times, does not at all mean that the main content of their narrative meshalim is different.

1. If an excursion is permitted, I have not found that the thesis of J. Jeremias is right (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 9th edn, 1977], pp. 17-18 and 29-39), that Jesus himself used the 'parables' primarily as weapons of attack and defence against opponents, their paraenetic use in the Gospels being due to a secondary development within the early Church. See 'The Narrative Meshalim in the Synoptic Gospels', p. 359.

The development, 'actualization' or modernization which is reflected in a number of the older and even more in the later narrative meshalim of the Gospels has first of all to do with the expectation of the *Parousia*. It is not probable that the expectation of the messiah or Son of Man was so strong and clear during the earthly ministry of Jesus as it became in the infant Church. But the narrative meshalim do not treat any mysteries of the *Parousia* itself, just the fact that it will be serious, inescapable and sudden and that it therefore demands true repentance and watchfulness.

To what extent has the *Christological* reflection of early Christianity made an impression on our texts? When we catch a glimpse of Jesus in this type of text, it is as a messenger-prophet-teacher from God, and representative of God (once or twice the Son), with a merciful and generous attitude toward humans. His healing and exorcistic activity or other mighty acts are not elucidated. His rejection and killing are taken up in one narrative mashal (The Wicked Husbandmen)—not concretely the offensive crucifixion—and the resurrection probably in one (The Rich Man and Lazarus). But he is, above all, the coming Judge (the *Parousia* meshalim).

Jesus' *person* is nowhere focused, problematized or directly elucidated in the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels. Scenes from the soteriological process in which Jesus is the central character are painted, and his attitude as well, but only the contours of his person. The exalted christological titles are nowhere needed in the interpretations and applications ('The Son of Man' has not the function of a title).

As to *soteriology*, we meet the process and some of its elements but not Christ's crucifixion and only once (probably) his resurrection. Nor are the theological *problems* of soteriology mirrored in a concrete way. This type of reflection has not yet entered our narrative meshalim, in any case not explicitly. Nor do we find that the *Spirit* is taken up and elucidated in any narrative mashal.

The *mission* to the Gentiles is clearly in view in a few narrative meshalim; it was easy to expand the words about the small and the lost (e.g. The Great Feast, and The Labourers in the Vineyard) and draw consequences from the condemnation of Israel (The Wicked Husbandmen). Presumably, it is also a sign of secondary expansion when the perspectives are explicitly *universal* (The Tares [in the inter-

pretation], The Last Judgment) in a narrative meshal. But these alterations are not great.

The overall impression is that the narrative meshalim have been used in the activity of early Christianity and therefore 'actualized' and even enriched with more texts of the same kind, but that all this was done in close connection and good accordance with the original, genuine narrative meshalim of the Master himself. The teachers who created them had 'understood all this' (Mt. 13.51). In fact, the reflection itself seems to have been *constrained* by the form and content of the Master's formulations; there is something archaic about the Synoptic narrative meshalim, as compared with the teaching of the other New Testament writings. Obviously, creativity did not have a free rein when the narrative meshalim of Jesus were transmitted and used—and new ones created—in the Church during the time between Jesus and the evangelists.

Conclusions from the Depicted Scenes of Teaching

Do our pericopes reveal something about the way in which Jesus and his followers taught—technically speaking? My interest here is the way in which Jesus conveys his narrative meshalim to his listeners according to the Synoptic evangelists. Even if Mark, Matthew and Luke were influenced by the way in which Christian teachers in their own time taught, or if they wanted themselves to depict an ideal model for emulation, in any case their teaching scenes are of interest. What do these scenes tell us?

Matthew has a strong proclivity for bringing the narrative meshalim together in blocks; only five of them are presented by themselves. And all the narrative meshalim in Matthew appear arranged in a fictive speech or a sayings-dominated section, in eight cases as a forceful final element. Therefore the narrative frames are both few and meagre. We do not get much help from Matthew in this case.

Luke presents most of the narrative meshalim one by one and, accordingly, often together with narrative frames, but these are brief. This is true not least in the latter part of the Gospel, where several of the narrative meshalim are part of brief *χρεῖαι*.¹ We do not get much

1. Note 13.23; 14.7; 15.1-3; 18.1; 19.11. On the *chreia* see from the present debate V.K. Robbins's contribution to D.E. Aune (ed.), *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 1-23, and B.L. Mack

help to satisfy our curiosity here either. Mark also is reticent, and hence we must resort to speculation here, more than in the foregoing.

One thing is clear: Jesus uses, according to the Synoptacists, narrative meshalim readily and often and in various contexts: when he teaches the throngs or the disciples, when he answers a question, when he silences opponents, etc. Only one text section—found in all three Gospels—gives us more concrete indications of the teaching situation, but it is somewhat special: the teaching about the *mysteries* of the Kingdom in the parable chapter. The rebuttal of Jesus' opponents in the temple area in Jerusalem during the last week is also worth consideration, but the rest of the narrative meshalim—the majority—hardly contain any remarks at all about the way in which they were presented, technically speaking.

The teaching method was scarcely one and the same on all these occasions, different as they are. In the parable chapter, we get the impression that Jesus presents a number of meshalim on their own and in a slightly veiled form; yet he expects those who have ears to understand their meaning. He is disappointed when his disciples must ask him about this mashal teaching (Mk 4.13). But then he gives them explanations calculated to help them understand the meshalim better. These meshalim have, as I said, a somewhat special character but nevertheless they do illuminate and make concrete their topics. (That is part of the purpose even in Mark.)

The narrative mashal of the Synoptics is not an abrupt, unprepared, independent narrative but one accompanied by other material and intended to be understood. When this does not happen spontaneously, explanatory comments can help. In the parable chapter, especially in Mark and Matthew, we meet the model 'public mashal—private explanation'. But the additional explanation is given with a certain regret; it should not have been necessary.

A number of narrative meshalim in the Gospels are so integrated in a teaching conversation with the audience that they perhaps do not appear as *texts* proper, in the depicted situation. (They have been *transmitted* as texts nonetheless, but that is another matter.)

Something similar applies to the seven (dispersed) narrative meshalim that, from beginning to end, have the form of an elaborate

question. (I am not thinking of the five which have a question at or after the end of an intact narrative.)

But apart from such (possible) exceptions, the meshalim in the Gospels are always treated as texts (the aphoristic meshalim as well). They are not just utterances. They even get a traditional appellation of genre: παραβολαί (meshalim). If a mashal is not understood, it is not rejected and replaced with the 'message' in a more successful form. The mashal remains, it is only complemented by commenting words.

Keeping to the situations of teaching sketched in the Gospels, we notice in the parable chapter that Jesus gives his disciples a detailed interpretation of The Sower; the four parts of this mashal are explained, one by one.¹ Jesus treats the mashal as a text which both he and attentive listeners know so well that each part of it can be interpreted. There is no hint of writing here. Thus the evangelists presuppose that Jesus has 'handed over' the mashal—in this case a rather long and composite one—to his attentive listeners so that it is in their memory. Although not a word is said about it, this ought to mean that, according to the evangelists, Jesus has implanted the text of the mashal in the minds of his listeners; he has not just narrated it but also repeated it. Shall we guess that he narrated it four times?

The Tares in Matthew is treated in the same way, though the interpretation given follows another pattern: first the eight figurative elements in the narrative are identified, then the climax of the story is translated into plain language. The interpretation that Jesus gives (and which in its present shape certainly is secondary)² presupposes that the text of the mashal can be recalled from memory, part by part.

On the other hand, Jesus sometimes presents narrative meshalim in contexts where a single presentation would be quite enough for giving the listener the illumination intended. I am thinking of such meshalim as The Mustard Seed, The Leaven, The Hidden Treasure, and The Pearl of Great Price. If meshalim of this kind—very brief texts with one simple striking point—were presented as an answer to a specific question (in these cases: 'Why must some people *die* for the Kingdom?' and 'Why do people sacrifice all that they have for the

1. See 'The Parable of the Sower'. One part of the mashal is not fully expounded, however: the figures 100, 60 and 30 at the end in Mark and Matthew; for an interpretation see 'The Seven Parables', p. 31.

2. See 'The Seven Parables', pp. 29-30.

Kingdom?', respectively), one single narration would be perfectly appropriate. But of course, if custom dictated that the considerate teacher should always repeat important 'words' in order to implant them in his listeners' minds, Jesus might have repeated himself even in cases when it was not really necessary.

The pericope which includes The Wicked Husbandmen is narrated in a more consistent way in Mark (12.1-12) than in Matthew or Luke. Here ill-disposed opponents get a narrative mashal, and it is given by itself, without explicit application. Jesus speaks in metaphorical and general terms in order not to put weapons into the hands of his enemies. Yet they understand that he is speaking of them; it is not difficult.

In Matthew (21.33-46) this mashal has been stylized into something of a salvation-historical allegory (former prophets, later prophets, Christ). It is first presented nakedly to the opponents, with a concluding question. When they have answered, and drawn the condemnatory conclusions, the next step of the teaching comes: Jesus directs the message of the mashal explicitly to them. This two-step reproof reminds us of Nathan's rebuke of David in 2 Samuel 12.¹

In Luke (20.9-19) this mashal is addressed to the people (v. 9) but overheard by the opponents (v. 19).

A mashal such as The Wicked Husbandmen may very well be narrated only once. If the intention is simply rebuttal of enemies, repetition of the mashal may not be needed. If, however, Jesus wanted to shake the Jewish leaders with a warning, repetition may have been appropriate.

Thus the composite picture of Jesus' teaching in narrative meshalim makes it quite possible that he presented his short narratives in different ways in different situations. A more uniform teaching model is in itself not at all impossible or even improbable; parents and teachers often follow certain set customs even when it may not be necessary; both also repeat themselves. But it is hard to know if in fact they did so in cases when such a method was not at all necessary.

1. In Matthew, The Wicked Husbandmen is now preceded by The Two Sons, which Jesus *explicitly* applies to his opponents. In this way the two-step reproof in the next mashal has been deprived of its finesse, and the concluding remark that they understood that he was referring to them (21.45) has lost its function. In Mark (12.12) the remark has its full sense.

10. *Continuity*

I assume Jesus of Nazareth was crucified in one of the first years of the 30s AD, and that the Synoptic Gospels were written between the end of the 60s (Mark) and 95. When the three evangelists put their Jesus-texts into 'an orderly account', they stood within a tradition which reached back to Jesus. A short succession of persons (Christian communities, individuals and groups) connected them with the Master, as did a word-tradition, a behavioural tradition, an institutional tradition and an inceptive material tradition.¹ I cannot elaborate on this scenario now.

Is it reasonable to believe that the evangelists can give us a fairly reliable picture of the way in which Jesus himself taught, granted that elements of it are secondary? I think so. We have, of course, reason for surmising that the early Christian communities differed from the group around the Galilaean Jesus in certain regards. The Master was active in various contexts and his meshalim were presumably conveyed in different ways. It is probable that the programmatic teaching of the Christian teachers was more concentrated, homogeneous and ritualized than the teaching of Jesus. But the differences were probably not very great: from a superficial methodological point of view, the teaching of Jesus was certainly rather like traditional Jewish teaching 'in meshalim', and the disciples of Jesus behaved surely as disciples used to do: they imitated their master.²

Jesus was active in a country where wisdom used to be conveyed encapsulated in short texts: meshalim and other 'words'. A 'mashalist' (מִשְׁאָלִיס, 'a man of parables and pithy sayings'), was a specialist in such texts, composed by other sages and by himself. To a teacher of this type, it was natural to present interested listeners with meshalim by 'writing them on the tablet of their heart': implant them on their memory by repeating them a number of times. The word for

1. See my book *The Gospel Tradition*.

2. Of course, the difference between 'the Master's metaphor' and 'the Pupil's metaphor' was inevitable even here: the master freely chooses to compose a parable to elucidate something, but the pupil feels bound to preserve and use precisely the given parable. See C.S. Lewis, 'Bluspels and Flalansferes', in M. Black (ed.), *The Importance of Language* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 36-50. I cannot discuss this general problem now.

‘transmit’ (רסב, παραδιδόναι) is not synonymous with ‘speak’. It means that *one hands over something to somebody so that the latter possesses it*. And the word for ‘receive (as tradition)’ (קבל, παραλαμβάνειν) is not synonymous with ‘hear’. It means that *one receives something so that one possesses it*.

If transmission takes place in writing, a document must be handed over or copied. If a text is ‘handed over’ in a purely oral way, it must be done by way of repetition. Certainly these conditions applied to Jesus as well, even if he always spoke in his own name without quoting other sages, except as words from Scripture.

Without doubt, receptive listeners could learn much when the Jesus-texts were used in early Christianity’s teaching and exhortation, liturgical celebrations, communal study of Scripture, discussions, etc. But I still believe that there also existed a more programmatic form of transmission: somebody actually ‘handed over’ a Jesus-text to another who received it in an appropriate way, whether a single text or a collection. This could be done either orally or in writing, or in both ways. In such cases the transmission of texts was a specific operation within the general didactic activity of early Christianity. I have tried to elucidate acts of this kind with comparative material elsewhere¹ and need not repeat it here. If men such as Mark, Matthew and Luke collected Jesus traditions with an intention to work out ‘an orderly account’, this method of receiving tradition (παραλαμβάνειν) was certainly inevitable: learning by heart or copying, or a combination of both.

11. *Memory–Writing*

I have given an account of facts and observations drawn from those Synoptic pericopes which contain a narrative mashal. My purpose was to present a basis for a discussion of the question of how these texts may have been handed on between Jesus and the evangelists. We have arrived at certain conclusions, for example, the main impression that the narrative meshalim of the Synoptic Gospels have been rather firm

1. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 2nd edn, 1964); see esp. pp. 71–189. See further Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 357–71 *et passim*.

texts. Alterations of the wording were possible but seem to have been made to a fairly limited extent.

I have not found any support for the idea that originally the narrative meshalim were part of some general narration about Jesus.

What role did writing play in this connection? Notebooks, etc., are nowhere mentioned in the New Testament documents.¹ Yet it is not at all impossible that means of this kind were taken into use in early Christianity to preserve the Jesus-texts, perhaps even very early.² The transition to larger collections was presumably done rather smoothly, step by step.

In my work with the material, I have not been able to find tenable criteria for deciding if our texts have been handed on orally or in writing. Such criteria are always difficult to find but I think that two main reasons for this dilemma can in this case be indicated. We have already touched upon them.

First, *the writing* which took place prior to the evangelists was not proper book-writing but private recording in notebooks, calculated primarily for the author's own use, in any case only for local needs. I do not even think that the Gospel of Mark was an ἔκδοσις, a proper, public book, ready for the market, but rather a codex written for the needs of Christian communities in a given area. In any case, the minor written collections we can reckon with during the time before the first evangelist were not books proper. They were no more than aids for memory (ὑπομνήματα).

Secondly, *the oral transmission* which took place in early Christianity and its milieu was strongly stamped by the written word.³ When Jewish children learned the written Torah they did not just learn how to read aloud from a scroll, they also learned the sacred text by heart. A Jewish man, versed in the Scriptures, had his Bible in his memory. He did not need to consult a scroll when he wanted to quote a word from the Torah or the Nebiim. In practice, the written Bible texts

1. The μεμβράναι in 2 Tim. 4.13 may be such notes, but I suppose that Old Testament books are meant.

2. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 491-98. The numerous recent text findings in Qumran and elsewhere show that, long before the time of Jesus, writing was more commonly used in Israel than we knew before; cf. S. Talmon's paper in this volume.

3. This observation determined the disposition of *Memory and Manuscript*. It is criticized by Kelber in *The Oral and the Written Gospel*. I have discussed his approach in *The Gospel Tradition*, pp. 28-57. See now also Ø. Andersen's paper in this volume.

functioned mainly as memorized, oral texts (except at the ritual reading in the divine service).

This way of learning determined also the way in which purely *oral* texts of great importance were learned. These were memorized in a similar way. In reality there was hardly a great difference between memorized written texts and memorized oral texts of the same type. Of course, a narrative *mashal* which was handed down exclusively by oral transmission was more susceptible of variation, when it was quoted and applied, than Nathan's *mashal* of the Poor Man's only Lamb (2 Samuel 12), but *the way in which they were learned* kept the differences from becoming very great.

These two factors seem to give a reasonable explanation to the phenomena as I have presented them above. Jesus' narrative *meshalim* were oral texts at the beginning. As oral texts they must be compared with oral texts *of the same type*—comparable narrative *meshalim* from early great Jewish authorities, not *halakot*, etc.¹—provided that Jesus' incomparable authority is not forgotten in the comparison.

To the extent that private notes were taken into use, this did not change much. Presumably, the written versions played their most important role at the stage of the evangelists' editorial and authorial work.

12. And Afterwards . . .

We may be pretty sure that the writing down of Jesus' narrative *meshalim* did not mean much to begin with. They continued to function as oral texts with a relatively free form anyway. But in the long run the writing down had more serious consequences for the narrative *meshalim* than for many aphoristic *meshalim* with their briefer and more fixed wording. They lost their 'free' linguistic character. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John soon became Holy Books, and their texts Scripture. Those elements of the Jesus tradition which were left outside them could not keep the same status; hence they deteriorated.²

1. This I stressed already in *Memory and Manuscript*, p. 335; cf. pp. 96-97, 146-48. A great problem is, however, that we have so few Jewish narrative *meshalim* which are early enough. We must try to reconstruct the bridge between narrative *meshalim* in the Old Testament (esp. 'The Poor Man's only Lamb') and their earliest rabbinic relatives.

2. See J. Jeremias, *Unbekannte Jesusworte* (Gütersloh: Mohr, 2nd edn, 1983),

At the same time those narrative meshalim which were included in the four main Gospels lost their 'natural' linguistic character.

An additional factor was that Christians learned in the Hellenistic schools that ancient books (the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*) should be interpreted as allegories. This attitude too contributed to making the narrative meshalim of the Gospels into unassailable texts, in which every detail was important. The Synoptic narrative meshalim became teaching *material* rather than teaching *tools*. They no longer had the simple purpose of illuminating and making concrete one specific point in the message about the Kingdom.¹

and O. Hofius, 'Agrapha', *TRE* 2 (1978), pp. 103-10.

1. I thank my friend Stephen Westerholm who polished my English.

THE MAKING OF NARRATIVES IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

E. Earle Ellis

1. Introduction

The explanation of the formation of narrative episodes in the Synoptic Gospels depends in great measure on one's assumptions (1) about source criticism, (2) about the context and manner in which the episodes were formulated and transmitted, and (3) about the length of Jesus' earthly ministry.

My present state of mind on these matters, which cannot be discussed at length here, is as follows:

1. On the first issue, in several passages common to Matthew and Mark the Matthaean form appears to be more original than the Markan¹ and, more importantly, in a large number of triple-tradition episodes (T) Matthaean and Lukan agreements against Mark point to a common non-Markan source or sources (Q).² For it is difficult to suppose that Luke would have composed his Gospel as he did if he had known and used our Gospel of Matthew. These considerations, as far as I can see, rule out the traditional two-document hypothesis, a revised Griesbach hypothesis³ and a sole dependence of Matthew on

1. E.g. Mt. 15.1-9; 19.3-9.

2. It is largely these two considerations that have led me to a rejection of Markan priority. T = an episode found in all three Synoptic Gospels; Q = non-Markan material common to Matthew and Luke that may reflect a broader underlying independent tradition. Twelve of the 43 narrative episodes below are T + Q. Cf. E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1978), p. 159 n. 45. But see R.H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), esp. pp. 45-88, for a recent and well-ordered argument for Markan priority.

3. Cf. B. Orchard and H. Riley, *The Order of the Synoptics* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987) and the literature cited.

Mark and of Luke on Matthew and Mark.¹ They strongly suggest, rather, that our Synoptic Gospels were mutually or individually dependent (1) on some proto-Gospel or Gospels, (2) on a number of tracts, each including several Gospel episodes, and/or (3) on smaller independent episodic traditions.

If there was a proto-Gospel, a proto-Matthew (Zahn) is in my opinion more probable than a proto-Mark (Schmithals).² If the transmission moved directly from relatively small units of tradition to the evangelists (Reicke), one must suppose, in the light of the wide-ranging common sequence of Synoptic episodes,³ a mutual knowledge by them of a common framework of presentation and probably also, given the kind of verbal agreements-with-variations observed between the Synoptics, the largely written form of the units. The latter, admittedly, is a more debatable point.

2. The classical form critics presupposed both the two-document hypothesis and a long-term (purely) oral transmission of Gospel traditions on the analogy of folk traditions. A more recent approach to form criticism has shown, I believe, that they were mistaken on both counts. At least some traditions were put in writing very early, if not from the beginning,⁴ and they were formed and first transmitted by

1. Cf. M.D. Goulder, *Luke: A New Paradigm*, I (JSOTSup, 20; 2 vols.; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), pp. 22-23. Pace Goulder it is difficult to believe, assuming Luke used Matthew, that he would have so scrambled and scattered the Matthaean episodes. Neither do I find convincing the priority of Luke as argued, e.g., by R.L. Lindsey, *A Hebrew Translation of the Gospel of Mark* (Jerusalem: Dugith, 2nd edn, 1973), pp. 27-38, 44-45. Cf. W. Schmithals, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985), pp. 137-38.

2. A proto-Matthew need not have been (only) in Aramaic as Zahn argued, but he makes a strong case. Cf. T. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 4th edn, 1984), pp. 1-32; *idem*, *Introduction to the New Testament*, II (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 3rd edn, 1953), pp. 570-617, *passim*. W. Schmithals, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, I (2 vols.; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1979), pp. 43-49, offers a recent version of older 'UrMarkus' hypotheses.

3. B. Reicke, *The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 174-79; cf. *idem*, 'Die Entstehungsverhältnisse der synoptischen Evangelien', *ANRW* II.25.2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 1758-91. Reicke argues, with considerable probability, for personal contacts between the evangelists Mark and Luke in Caesarea c. AD 58-60 and for a common dependence of Matthew and Mark on Petrine materials in the church at Jerusalem.

4. That is, in the missions of the Twelve and of the Seventy during Jesus'

apostles and their prophetically gifted co-workers in a deliberate, cultivated and careful manner on Palestinian soil.¹

3. According to Luke (3.1) Jesus began his public ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, generally put at AD 28 or 29, and was crucified in a year in which the official Passover sacrifice fell on a Friday, generally put at AD 30 or 33.² The dates for Jesus' ministry that seem most probable to me are autumn 28 to spring 33.³ On this view one may place more weight on what an earlier generation called 'the training of the Twelve'⁴ and may tend to view similar episodes in the Gospels not as doublets but as separate events. If one assumes a one- or two-year ministry of Jesus, one may tend to see similar episodes as variants of one event and be less inclined to give Jesus an elaborate teaching or, much less, an organizational role with his followers.

earthly ministry. See below p. 330. Cf. E.E. Ellis, 'New Directions in Form Criticism', in *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie* (Festschrift H. Conzelmann; ed. G. Strecker; Tübingen: Mohr, 1975), pp. 304-309 (= Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, pp. 242-47); P. Stuhlmacher, 'Zum Thema: Das Evangelium und die Evangelien', in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), pp. 2-12 (ET: *The Gospel and the Gospels* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], pp. 1-11); H. Schürmann, 'Die vorösterlichen Anfänge der Logientradition', in *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1968), pp. 39-65. For a further critique of a period of oral transmission, cf. Schmithals, *Einleitung*, pp. 299-315, 313.

1. E.E. Ellis, 'Gospels Criticism', in Stuhlmacher, *The Gospel and the Gospels*, pp. 26-52. Cf. B. Gerhardsson, *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); *idem*, *The Gospel Tradition* (Lund: Gleerup, 1986); R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer* (Tübingen: Mohr, 3rd edn, 1988); Reicke, *Roots*, pp. 174-79.

2. On the chronological problems, cf. J. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 259-73, 291-300.

3. So, B. Reicke, *The New Testament Era* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 183. Cf. H.W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 3rd edn, 1979), p. 114 (AD 29-33); E. Stauffer, *Jesus and His Story* (London: SCM Press, 1960), pp. 17-18 (AD 28-32). Otherwise: J.A.T. Robinson, *The Priority of John* (London: SCM Press, 1985), pp. 123-57 (AD 28-30) and the literature cited.

4. A.B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1971; 1st edn, 1877). This approach was refined and advanced by B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1961); R.P. Meye, *Jesus and the Twelve* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968); Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*.

The present paper, which is confined to an examination of selected narrative episodes in the Synoptics, assumes a four-year ministry of Jesus and takes the approach of the more recent form criticism. It rejects Markan priority and, while it presupposes the independence of the Gospels of Matthew and of Luke, does not postulate any precise source-hypothesis.

2. *A Classification of Synoptic Narrative Episodes*

Narrative episodes in the Gospels may be classified as 'concise' and 'circumstantial'.¹ Concise narratives are most often identified with episodes that have been termed variously apothegms,² paradigms,³ pronouncement stories,⁴ or *chreia*.⁵ They ordinarily contain a brief statement of a situation that leads to and is centered on a saying of Jesus,⁶ but they also include brief accounts of miracles and other actions in which the focus is upon an act of Jesus and in which the same economies of expression are observed.⁷ Circumstantial narra-

1. C.H. Dodd, 'The Appearances of the Risen Christ: An Essay in Form-Criticism of the Gospels', in *Studies in the Gospels, Festschrift R.H. Lightfoot* (ed. D.E. Nineham; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955), pp. 9-35 (= *More New Testament Studies* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968], pp. 102-33).

2. Cf. R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 5th edn, 1963), pp. 11-69: 'sayings of Jesus set in a brief context' (p. 11).

3. M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2nd edn, 1965), pp. 37-69.

4. V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (London: Macmillan, 1933), pp. 63-87.

5. Cf. K. Berger, *Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments* (Heidelberg: Quelle, 1984), pp. 80-92; Dibelius, *Tradition to Gospel*, pp. 152-53; B.L. Mack and V.K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989), who, like Berger, interpret midrashim (e.g. Mt. 12.1-8 par.) and longer controversy dialogues (e.g. Mt. 26.6-13 par.) as expanded *chreia* (pp. 89-141). But see below p. 328.

6. E.g. 'Blessing the Children', Mt. 19.13-15 (T). The isolated saying, in which the context is lacking, ordinarily represents a secondary and derivative usage. Cf. Mt. 19.3-9 with 5.31-32; Lk. 11.1-4 with Mt. 6.9-13; Acts 20.35; 1 Tim. 5.18; *Gospel of Thomas*.

7. E.g. 'Healings in Peter's House', Mt. 8.14-17 // Mk 1.29-34 // Lk. 4.38-41 (T + Q). On the problematic of 'miracle story' as a distinct literary genre cf. Berger, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 305-10.

tives are fuller accounts that include arresting detail and traits of character of the participants.

This essay examines a number of circumstantial narratives and afterwards addresses the question whether (1) such narratives are later elaborations of the concise pieces, as much of the early form criticism supposed;¹ or whether (2) the concise units, like polished stones or a well-honed razor, were produced from the longer stories; or whether (3) the two kinds of units were composed concurrently to serve different needs in the apostolic congregations and missions.

The following list of narrative episodes, which is not exhaustive, is numbered and classified according to (1) Jesus' mighty acts, and (2) other events in his life and ministry. Collated within the first division are exorcisms, Sabbath healings, other healings, raisings of the dead, and other nature miracles. Collated within the second division are narratives of the infancy, the public, and the post-resurrection ministries.

The narratives of the Passion are excluded, and a few classified by others² as concise narratives or apothegms are marked with an asterisk (*). Episodes common to Matthew, Mark and Luke, that is, the triple tradition, are designated by (T). Non-Markan episodes common to Matthew and Luke are designated by (Q). A dozen triple-tradition episodes, that have such non-Markan elements and indicate that Matthew and Luke had a (second) source in common are designated by (T + Q). Episodes common to Matthew and Mark, Mark and Luke, Luke and John, that is, double traditions, are designated by (D); those peculiar to Matthew by (M), to Mark by (Mk) and to Luke by (L). Johannine episodes are designated by (J).

1. Narrations of Jesus' Mighty Acts

Six Exorcisms

1. Unclean spirit
Mk 1.21-28 // Lk. 4.31-37 (D)
2. Gadarene demoniac(s)

1. E.g. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 12, 51-55, 61-62, *passim*; Dibelius, *Tradition to Gospel*, p. 99; Berger, *Formgeschichte*, pp. 85, 307. But see Taylor, *Formation*, pp. 151, 153.

2. That is, Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 12-16, 34-35, 38, 56, 209-12; Dodd, *More*, pp. 102-103.

Mt. 8.28-34 // Mk 5.1-20 // Lk. 8.26-39 (T)

3. Mute (and blind) demoniac
Mt. 12.22-32 // Mk 3.19b-30 // Lk. 11.14-23 (T + Q)
4. Mute demoniac
Mt. 9.32-34 (M)
- *5. Syro-Phoenician's daughter
Mt. 15.21-30 // Mk 7.24-31 (D)
6. Lunatic (or epileptic) boy
Mt. 17.14-21 // Mk 9.14-29 // Lk. 9.37-43a (T + Q)

Three Sabbath Healings (cf. Jn 5.1-18; 9.1-41)

- *7. Spirit of infirmity
Lk. 13.10-17 (L)
- *8. Withered hand
Mt. 12.9-14 // Mk 3.1-6 // Lk. 6.6-11 (T)
- *9. Dropsy
Lk. 14.1-6 (L)

Ten Other Healings (cf. Jn 4.46-54)

10. Leper
Mt. 8.1-4 // Mk 1.40-45 // Lk. 5.12-16 (T + Q)
11. Centurion's slave
Mt. 8.5-13 // Lk. 7.1-10 (Q)
12. Healings in Peter's house
Mt. 8.14-17 // Mk 1.29-34 // Lk. 4.38-41 (T + Q)
- *13. Paralytic
Mt. 9.1-8 // Mk 2.1-12 // Lk. 5.17-26 (T + Q)
14. Hemorrhage/Jairus' daughter
Mt. 9.18-26 // Mk 5.21-43 // Lk. 8.40-56 (T + Q)
15. Blind Bartimaeus (and another)
Mt. 20.29-34 // Mk 10.46-52 // Lk. 18.35-43 (T)
16. Two blind men in house
Mt. 9.27-31 (M)
17. Deaf mute in Decapolis
Mk 7.31-37 (Mk)
18. Blind man at Bethsaida
Mk 8.22-26 (Mk)
- *19. Ten lepers
Lk. 17.11-19 (L)

Two Raisings of the Dead (cf. Jn 11.1-44)

20. Widow of Nain's son
Lk. 7.11-17 (L)
21. Jairus' daughter (see no. 14 above)
Mt. 9.18-26 (T + Q)

Seven Other Nature Miracles (cf. Jn 2.1-7; 21.1-14)

22. Stilling the storm
Mt. 8.23-27 // Mk 4.35-41 // Lk. 8.22-25 (T + Q)
23. Feeding five thousand
Mt. 14.13-21 // Mk 6.32-44 // Lk. 9.10b-17 // Jn 6.1-15 (T+Q+J)
24. Walking on the water
Mt. 14.22-33 // Mk 6.45-52 // Jn 6.16-21 (D + J)
25. Feeding four thousand
Mt. 15.29-39 // Mk 8.1-10 (D)
26. Miraculous catch
Lk. 5.1-11 (L)
- *27. Shekel in fish's mouth
Mt. 17.24-27 (M)
28. Cursing the fig tree
Mt. 21.18-22 // Mk 11.12-14, 20-25 (D)

*2. Narrations of Other Events in Jesus' Life and Ministry**Two Infancy Narratives* ¹

29. The Magi and the flight
Mt. 2.1-23 (M)
30. Visit to the temple
Lk. 2.41-52 (L)

1. (1) Lk. 1.5-2.40 consists of a cycle of six prophecies, three within visions. They are 'sayings episodes' in which the narrative portions provide only connecting links. Cf. E.E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke: Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 5th edn, 1987), pp. 67-84. (2) Mt. 1.18-25 also highlights the angelic and biblical prophecies (pp. 20-23) to which the brief narrative is subordinate. (3) The Temptation episode (Mt. 4.1-11 // Lk. 4.1-13) and (4) the sending of the Twelve and of the Seventy (Mt. 10.1-11.1; Mk 6.7-13; Lk. 9.1-10a; 10.1-25) are similar. Like the apothegms, these passages are more 'word' than 'work' and belong more to the 'sayings' side of the tradition than to the narrative proper.

Four Narratives Relating to the Ministry

31. The Baptist and Jesus
Mt. 3.1-17 // Mk 1.2-11 // Lk. 3.2b-22; cf. Jn 1.19-28 (T + Q)
32. The death of the Baptist
Mt. 14.1-12 // Mk 6.14-29 (D)
33. Transfiguration
Mt. 17.1-13 // Mk 9.2-13 // Lk. 9.28-36 (T + Q)
34. Entry and cleansing temple
Mt. 21.1-17 // Mk 11.1-11, 15-19 // Lk. 19.28-40, 45-46
= Jn 12.12-29; 2.13-22 (T + Q + J)

Nine Post-Resurrection Narratives

35. Women at the tomb¹
Mt. 28.1-10 // Mk 16.1-8 (9-11) // Lk. 24.1-12 // Jn 20.1-18 (T + J)
36. Re-animation of the dead near Jesus
Mt. 27.52-53 (M)
37. Bribing the guards
Mt. 28.11-15; 27.62-66 (M)
38. Road to Emmaus
(Mk 16.12-13); Lk. 24.13-35 (L)
39. The Eleven (Ten) and others
(Mk 16.14-18); Lk. 24.36-49 // Jn 20.19-23 (D)
- (40. Thomas and the rest
Jn 20.24-29 [J])
- (41. The Seven in Galilee
Jn 21.1-23 [J])
42. The Eleven in Galilee
Mt. 28.16-20 (Mk 16.15-18) (M)
43. The Eleven at the Ascension
(Mk 16.19); Lk. 24.50-53; cf. Acts 1.6-12 (L)

1. Reicke (*Roots*, p. 44) apparently takes the narrative of the empty tomb and the appearances near the tomb to be variations on one traditional narrative. But see H.B. Swete, *The Appearances of our Lord after the Passion* (London: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 9-12 (a complex of narratives). J.E. Alsup (*The Post-Resurrection Appearance Stories of the Gospel Tradition* [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1975], pp. 105-108, 206-13), who assumes a two-document source hypothesis, thinks (1) that a women-oriented account of the empty tomb was supplemented by a disciple-oriented account and (2) that the empty tomb narrative was later supplemented by appearance narratives.

3. The Structure of the Narrative Episodes

The above narratives may now be examined in terms of affinities and variations in their structure. One or two narratives from each classification will be separated into its individual parts and significant differences in other episodes will be noted.

a. Exorcisms

For example, Gadarene demoniac: Mt. 8.28-34 (T)

Setting (v. 28) + demoniac cry (vv. 29ff.) + exorcism (v. 32) + reaction of the people (vv. 33-34) [+ reaction of the healed man, Mk, Lk.].

Comments:

1. An exorcism episode may open and close with the same keywords (no. 1. 'teaching', Mk 1.22, 27; 'authority', Lk. 4.32, 36).¹

2. The exorcism may serve only to introduce a teaching of Jesus (no. 3).

3. An appeal on behalf of the demoniac may substitute for the demoniac's cry (nos. 5, 6).

4. The episode may include the reaction of the healed man (nos. 1, 2), of the people (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4), of the opponents of Jesus (nos. 3, 4) or of the disciples (no. 6).

5. Notwithstanding these variations, the exorcisms in the Gospels display a clear and wide-ranging agreement in form that stands in contrast to similar stories in Jewish and pagan literature.²

1. There is here an analogy—but only an analogy—to the pattern of the poem midrash. But it may be only an *inclusio*, either from classical rhetoric and mediated via Judaism (Daube), or, perhaps more likely, from Jewish literary patterns reaching back to the Old Testament (cf. Talmon). On the poem pattern in Jesus' exposition of Scripture, cf. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, pp. 155, 157-58; *idem*, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), pp. 96-101. Cf. D. Daube, 'Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric', *HUCA* 22 (1949), pp. 239-64; S. Talmon, "'400 Jahre". . .', in *Die hebräische Bibel und ihre zweifache Nachgeschichte* (ed. E. Blum; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1990), p. 16; *idem*, 'The Presentation of Synchronicity. . .', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 27 (1978), p. 20; *idem*, 'The Structuring of Biblical Books', *ASTI* 10 (1976), pp. 140ff. (cf. Gen. 15.12 with 15.17; 1 Sam. 18.20 with 18.28-29; Ezek. 40.2, 5 with 43.12).

2. Specifically in their focus on the power of Jesus and in their witness to his

b. *Sabbath Healings*

For example, Withered hand: Mt. 12.9-14 (T)

Setting (vv. 9-10a) + biblical question (v. 10b; cf. Exod. 20.8-11) + counterquestion (v. 11; cf. Exod. 23.5) + conclusion: *Qal wahomer* (v. 12) + healing (v. 13) + reaction of Pharisees (v. 14).

Comments:

1. The three Sabbath healings are the occasion for a biblical debate, implicitly on Exod. 20.8-11 and Exod. 23.5, on which this episode is focused.¹

2. This episode is basically structured, most clearly in Matthew, on a *yelammedenu* midrash-pattern,² and the (implied) biblical debates between Jesus and the synagogue ruler (no. 7) and the dinner guests (no. 9) may originally have had a similar structure.

c. *Other Healings*

For example, Leper: Mt. 8.1-4 (T + Q)

Setting (v. 1) + leper's appeal (v. 2) + healing by touch (v. 3) + commands of Jesus (v. 4) [+ reaction of the leper, Mk, Lk.].

Comments:

1. The appeal may be made by the sick one (nos. 10, 15, 16, 19) or on his behalf (nos. 11, 12 [Mk, Lk.], 13 [implicit], 14, 17, 18).

2. The healing may be by Jesus' touch (nos. 10, 12, 15, 18), by his word (nos. 11, 13, 15 [Mk, Lk.], 19), by his word and touch (nos. 14, 16, 17) or, a few times, by the use of spittle (nos. 17, 18; cf. Jn 9.6). Occasionally it may be from a distance (nos. 5, 11; cf. Jn 4.46-54).

3. Sometimes Jesus commands silence about the healing (nos. 10, 14 [Mk, Lk.], 16, 17, 18), sometimes not (nos. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19).

4. Reactions to the healing by the people (nos. 13, 14, 17), by the healed person (nos. 10 [Mk, Lk.], 12, 15, 16, 17, 19) are often

messianic role and status. Contrast the form and description, for example, in Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46-49; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4, 20; H.L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, IV (4 vols.; Munich: Beck, 1922-28), pp. 533ff.

1. The (later) rabbis allowed healing on the Sabbath only if the illness was life threatening. E.g. *Mek. Exod.* 31.13; cf. Strack-Billerbeck, I, pp. 623-29.

2. On the *yelammedenu* pattern in Jesus' exposition of Scripture, cf. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, pp. 158-59; *idem*, *Early Christianity*, pp. 97-98.

included, a few times not (nos. 11, 18).

5. A dialogue between Jesus and the one who appeals is sometimes included (nos. 11, 14 [Mk, Lk.], 15, 16, 18, 19), sometimes not (nos. 10, 12, 13, 17).

6. As in the Sabbath healings, in the healing of the centurion's slave (no. 11, Lk. 7.2: δοῦλος) and of the paralytic (no. 13) the narrative is only a framework for Jesus' teaching. In the case of the paralytic the teaching concerns Jesus' person and role and is structured on a *yelammedenu*-like commentary (midrash) pattern. In the case of the slave Matthew uses the *shaliah* principle to subsume the elders under the person of the centurion.¹ In this respect (and probably in the warning logion, Mt. 8.11-12) it is secondary to Luke.

Paralytic: Mt. 9.1-8 (T + Q)

Setting (v. 1) + implicit appeal (v. 2a) + word of forgiveness (v. 2b) + Scripture scholars' biblical question (v. 3; cf. Exod. 34.7; Isa. 43.25; 55.7) + Jesus' counterquestion (vv. 4-5; cf. Deut. 32.39; Ps. 103.3-4) + healing (vv. 6-7) + reaction of people (v. 8).²

d. *Raising the Dead*

Jairus' daughter: Mk 5.21-43 (T + Q)

Setting (v. 21) + appeal of Jairus (vv. 22-23) + narrative (v. 24) + additional setting (vv. 25-26) + woman's implied appeal (vv. 27-28) + healing by her touch (v. 29) + response and dialogue of Jesus (vv. 30-34) + reaction of the servant (v. 35) + comments of Jesus (vv. 36-39) + reaction of people (v. 40) + call to life by touch and word (v. 41) + reaction of the corpse (v. 42a) + reaction of onlookers (v. 42b) + command of Jesus (v. 43).

Widow's son: Lk. 7.11-17 (L)

Setting (vv. 11-12) + call to life (vv. 13-14) + reaction of the corpse

1. This principle appears to be a technique of Matthaean composition, used also in the episodes of feeding five thousand (no. 23) where the disciples' action is subsumed under the person of Jesus (cf. Lk. 9.14-15 with Mt. 14.19) and of Jairus' daughter (no. 21) where the word of Jairus and of one of his household are merged into his comment (cf. Mk 5.23, 35 with Mt. 9.18). On the *shaliah* principle in Judaism, cf. K.H. Rengstorff, 'ἀποστολος', *TDNT*, I (1964/1933), pp. 413-20.

2. The description is more elaborate and the midrash pattern more explicit in Matthew than in Mark and Luke.

(v. 15a) + reaction of Jesus (v. 15b; cf. 1 Kgs 17.23) + reaction of people (vv. 16-17).

Comments:

1. Unlike the case of Jairus, the raising of the widow's son (no. 20) is done at Jesus' initiative and highlights, in the description (v. 15b) and in the people's reaction (v. 16c), the (mistaken) identity of Jesus with Elijah. It thus prepares for Jesus' response to the disciples of the Baptist in Lk. 7.19-20, 22 (cf. Isa. 26.19; 29.18; 35.5-6; 42.18; 61.1-2) and for his question in Lk. 9.18-19.¹

2. The elaborate and unique form of the story of the hemorrhagic woman and Jairus' daughter (no. 14) appears to have been one unit from the beginning² and is given in greatest detail by Mark.

- a. The common features—setting, act of Jesus, reactions—follow the pattern of the healing narratives.
- b. The added features in Mark and Luke—comments of Jesus, fear, command to silence—are found in both healing and nature-miracle episodes. The comments of Jesus form a verbal teaching element in the narrative.

e. Other Nature Miracles

For example, Walking on water: Mt. 14.22-33 (D + J)

Setting (vv. 22ff.) + miracle (v. 25) + reaction of disciples (v. 26) + response of Jesus (v. 27) + reaction of Peter (v. 28) + response of Jesus (v. 29a) + Peter's fear (vv. 29b-30) + response of Jesus (v. 31) +

1. Cf. Ellis, *Gospel of Luke*, p. 118; B. Lindars, 'Elijah, Elisha and the Gospel Miracles', in *Miracles* (ed. C.F.D. Moule; London: Mowbray, 1965), pp. 63-79. For a parallel in (later) pagan literature see below.

2. So, J. Weiss, 'Die drei älteren Evangelien', in *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, I (2 vols.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1907), p. 121; K.L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Darmstadt: WBG, 1964 [1919]), p. 148: 'Here the actual remembrance of a historical occasion is retained. The healing of the woman took place on the way to Jairus' house'; V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to Mark* (London: Macmillan, 5th edn, 1959): 'The narrative . . . is not, however, a community product, rounded by repetition, but a record based on personal testimony' (p. 285). From 'the absence of connecting links . . . it is reasonable to infer that the connection [between the two stories] is historical, and not merely literary. . . [since] the intercalation of narratives is not a feature of Mark's method' (p. 289). Otherwise, cf. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, p. 214.

miracle (v. 32) + reaction of disciples (v. 33).

Comments:

1. Like the raising of the widow's son, the other nature miracles characteristically (an exception is no. 22) present Jesus as taking the initiative.

2. Like the forgiveness of sins (no. 13), the nature miracles show Jesus exercising the prerogatives of Yahweh: *Christus Creator*.

3. In the feedings (nos. 23, 25) Jesus' blessing, breaking and giving the bread have Last Supper overtones, and no reactions to the miracle are included. Jesus' response addresses the disciples' fear (nos. 22, 24, 26) or their obtuseness (nos. 23, 25, 28; cf. Mt. 16.9-10 par.) in the presence of divine power, interpreted in both instances as a lack of faith.

4. The fish-catch (no. 26) concludes the reactions to Jesus' person with an invitation by Jesus to follow him. The episode may represent the original form of call narratives that have elsewhere been abbreviated.¹

5. Like the Sabbath healings, the shekel episode (no. 27) is a summary of a *yelammedenu*-like exposition with the miracle as the conclusion.

Shekel: Mt. 17.24-27 (M)

Setting (v. 24a) + collectors' biblical question (v. 24b; Exod. 30.11-16) + Peter's response (v. 25a) + Jesus' biblical question (v. 25b; cf. 2 Chron. 9.24; 10.3ff.)² + Peter's answer (v. 26a) + Jesus' answer (v. 26b), command and implied miracle (v. 27).

f. Narratives of the Infancy and of the Ministry

For example, Magi and flight: Mt. 2.1-23 (M)

1. E.g. Mt. 4.18-22 par. On Lk. 13.10-17 (no. 7) Bultmann (*Synoptic Tradition*) recognizes that 'the style of the miracle story could have influenced that of the apotheism' (p. 13) .

2. Lev. 6.16 is the rabbinical basis for excepting the priests from the tax; cf. Strack-Billerbeck, I, pp. 762-63. However, Jesus claims the exception on the analogy of royalty, i.e., sonship to God, with reference to the practice of 'the kings of the earth' but also perhaps with an allusion to the ancient practices of Israel (e.g. 2 Chron. 9.24; 10.3ff.). On the issues cf. A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 5th edn, 1959), pp. 538-43; Zahn, *Matthäus*, pp. 570ff.

Setting (v. 1) + star (v. 2; cf. Num. 24.17) + narrative (vv. 2-5) + text (v. 6; Mic. 5.2) + narrative (vv. 7-12) + command of Angel of Yahweh (v. 13; cf. Exod. 3.2-17)¹ + narrative (vv. 14-15) + text (v. 15b; Hos. 11.1) + narrative (v. 16) + text (vv. 17-18; Jer. 31.15) + command of Angel of Yahweh (vv. 19-20) + narrative (vv. 21-23a) + concluding text (v. 23b; cf. Isa. 11.1).

Comments:

1. Lk. 2.41-52 (no. 30) is quite different from the narrative at Mt. 2.1-23 (no. 29). It is similar in form to an apothegm or a healing story with an action of Jesus (vv. 43, 46) evoking reactions from the Scripture scholars (v. 47) and the parents (v. 48) and culminating in Jesus' pronouncement (v. 49).

2. Mt. 2.1-23 uses a series of biblical texts to form a frame and a commentary on the narrative. It may be termed a 'narrative midrash', defined as a description of an event in Jesus' life or ministry, in terms of Old Testament quotations or allusions so that the meaning of the event as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy is made clearly apparent.

3. For several reasons it is not to be regarded as the creation of a Jesus-event from Old Testament texts.² Matthew has a strong salvation-history orientation and accommodates the Old Testament to Jesus and not vice versa, and the texts could not have produced the story

1. Cf. Zahn, *Matthäus*, pp. 76-77. In the Old Testament the angel of Yahweh 'is frequently indistinguishable from Yahweh Himself' (A.R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* [Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 1961], p. 29).

2. *Contra* R.H. Gundry, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 26-41; M.D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), pp. 234-47, 395ff. In his *Luke* (I, pp. 73-128) Goulder has given up the term 'midrash', but he continues to suppose that the evangelists created events in Jesus' ministry on the basis of Old Testament passages. For criticisms of this approach, cf. Ellis, *Early Christianity*, pp. 93ff., referring to Mt. 2.1-23; from a rabbinic perspective, see P.S. Alexander, 'Midrash and the Gospels', in *Synoptic Studies* (ed. C.M. Tuckett; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), pp. 12-15; L. Morris, 'The Gospels and Jewish Lectionaries', in *Gospel Perspectives*, III (ed. R.T. France and D. Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983), esp. p. 149. On the evangelists' salvation-history perspective, cf. J. Rohde, *Die Redaktionsgeschichtliche Methode* (Hamburg: Furche, 1966), *passim* (ET: *Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists* [London: SCM Press, 1968]).

since their meaning is too ambiguous.

4. The repetitive use of 'star' (vv. 2, 7, 9, 10) rather than, say, 'constellation' or 'sign' supports an allusion to Num. 24.17.

Baptist: Mt. 3.1-17 (T + Q)

Setting (vv. 1-2) + opening text (v. 3; Isa. 40.3) + narrative (vv. 4ff.) + the Baptist's response to churchmen (vv. 7-10) + his witness to Jesus (vv. 11-15) + baptism of Jesus (v. 16) + heavenly vision and voice (vv. 16b-17; Ps. 2.7; Isa. 42.1).

Comments:

1. In T and probably in Q the narrative is framed by opening and concluding biblical texts, the latter as the answer to the former. This suggests that the episode is an original unity, a narrative midrash as defined above (on Mt. 2.1-23).

2. In Matthew the narrative midrash introduces the opening text with a *peshet* formula (v. 3: οὗτός ἐστιν). Like Peter's sermon in Acts 2.14-36 (v. 16: τοῦτό ἐστιν), it is not, as in the rabbis, commentary on the biblical texts; rather, like Qumran, it uses the texts as commentary on current events, which are viewed as the fulfillment of the biblical passages.¹

3. Keyword connectors (e.g. 'wilderness', 'voice', 'son' [Mk]) between the cited texts and the narrative are sparse.

4. Mark uses a double opening text (1.2-3) and lacks the (future) judgment motif in Q (Mt. 3.7-10, 12 = Lk. 3.7-9, 17-18). With the double opening he identifies Jesus as the manifestation of Yahweh as both Judge (Mal. 3.1) and Redeemer (Isa. 40.3); with the double closing text he defines Jesus, and Yahweh's presence, in terms of the royal messiah (Ps. 2.7) and Yahweh's Servant (Isa. 42.1).

5. Luke has a more extensive setting (3.1-3) and a dialogue (3.10-14).

Transfiguration: Mt. 17.1-13 (T + Q)

Setting (v. 1) + Transfiguration with Moses and Elijah vision (vv. 2-3) + reaction of Peter (v. 4) + biblical response of the heavenly voice (v. 5; Ps. 2.7; Isa. 42.1; Deut. 18.15, 18) + reaction of disciples (v. 6)

1. Cf. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, pp. 203ff. It is a part of what Professor Neusner calls 'midrash as prophecy'. Cf. J. Neusner, *What Is Midrash?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 31-40.

+ response of Jesus (v. 7) + cessation of vision and command of Jesus (vv. 8-9) + disciples' biblical question regarding Elijah (v. 10; cf. Mal. 4.5-6) + Jesus' interpretation and concluding Passion prediction (v. 12) + reaction of disciples (v. 13).

Comments:

1. The narrative is framed on Old Testament motifs and texts that point to Jesus' nature and destiny.

2. Moses and Elijah probably represent the witness of the law and prophets to Jesus, a witness that is underscored by the divine voice.

3. Luke transfers the Passion prediction back into the vision (Lk. 9.31) and omits the Elijah question that he treats elsewhere (Lk. 1.17; 7.27).

4. The Elijah (vv. 2-3, 10) and Suffering Servant motifs (vv. 5, 12), present in both parts of the narrative and in both T and Q, argue that the episode was an original unity, formulated as a narrative midrash as defined above (on Mt. 2.1-23).

Entry and cleansing: Mt. 21.1-17 (T + Q + J)

Setting (v. 1a) + act of Jesus interpreted by biblical texts (vv. 1b-5; Isa. 62.11 + Zech. 9.9) + reaction of people described in terms of a biblical text (vv. 6-9; Ps. 118.25-26) + reaction of city (vv. 10-11) + act of Jesus interpreted by biblical texts (vv. 12-13; Isa. 56.7; Jer. 7.11) + reaction of the sick (v. 14) + reaction of children described in terms of a biblical text (v. 15; Ps. 118.25-26) + reaction of Scripture scholars (vv. 15-16) + reaction of Jesus with a concluding biblical text (vv. 16b-17; Ps. 8.2).

Comments:

1. Ps. 118.25-26 refers to the temple court.¹ It is alluded to in T and Q during the entry to Jerusalem, linking the entry to the ensuing temple cleansing, and in Matthew (21.15) is again alluded to in the cleansing.

2. Zech. 9.9 is implicit in Jesus' action (Mark, Luke) and is explicitly cited by Matthew.

3. The biblical quotations support an original unitary formulation

1. Cf. L.C. Allen, *Psalms*, III (3 vols.; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983-), pp. 124-25; D. Kidner, *Psalms*, II (2 vols.; London: Tyndale Press, 1975), p. 415; Zahn, *Matthäus*, p. 621.

not only of the entry episode (Mark, Luke) but also of the entry-cleansing episode (Matthew).

4. Luke (19.41-44) inserts between the entry and the cleansing Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of the city in order to tie it to Christ's judgment on the profaned temple.

5. For similar reasons Mark postpones the cleansing and places it within the episode of the curse on the fig tree (no. 28). Cf. Lk. 13.4-9.

6. Like nos. 29, 31 and 33, this episode was probably formulated as a narrative midrash (see on Mt. 2.1-23).

The literary form of 'the death of the Baptist' (no. 32) is distinctive among the above 'ministry' episodes and has little in common with the rest of them. Apart from the reaction of Herod (Mt. 14.9) it is also unlike the form of the healing narratives. Whether this is because of its unusual theme or because it was formulated in a different circle, or both, is difficult to say.

g. Post-Resurrection Narratives

For example, Eleven: Lk. 24.36-49 (D)

Jesus appears (v. 36) + reaction of disciples (v. 37) + response of Jesus (vv. 38-39) + his reassuring action (vv. 39-43) + his exposition of Scripture (vv. 44-47) + his commission and command (vv. 48-49).

Comments:

1. A number of the appearance episodes follow a common general pattern.¹ Jesus appears unrecognized (nos. 35, 38, 39, 41, 42), participates in a meal (nos. 38, 39, 41) and gives a commission (nos. 35, 39, 41, 42).

2. Luke depicts Jesus as a teacher of Scripture (nos. 38, 39), who interprets it of himself.²

3. The story of the women (no. 35), as H.B. Swete put it, 'has

1. J.E. Alsup (*Appearance Stories*, pp. 211ff.) and C.H. Dodd (*More*) offer illuminating discussions on the literary form of the appearance story. Alsup concludes that they are similar to anthropomorphic theophany texts of the Old Testament (e.g. Gen. 18) which also 'share a basic similarity and unity of form and intention' (p. 263).

2. Cf. P. Schubert, 'The Structure and Significance of Luke 24', in *Neutestamentliche Studien* (Festschrift R. Bultmann; ed. W. Eltester; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1954), pp. 165-86.

reached us in a less certain form than the rest of the narratives of the forty days'.¹

4. *Formulation and Features of Synoptic Narratives*

The above analysis invites a number of questions concerning the narrative episodes of the Synoptic Gospels, specifically, (1) the model(s) on which they were constructed, (2) the role of geographical settings, (3) their oral and/or written transmission, (4) the ways in which the forms were altered, and (5) the circle(s) responsible for their original formulation.

Two Common Patterns

At least *two stock patterns*² can be identified, one found primarily in the exorcisms and healing narratives and the other primarily in the 'ministry' episodes of traditioned events in Jesus' life. *The first* is built upon the following framework.

Setting + appeal to Jesus + Jesus' response + reactions

Within this framework the episodes are designed to reveal something both about Jesus' person and mission and about the responses, positive and negative, that his actions evoked. Structured in this way, they are highly christological and well-focused to serve as teaching tools. Indeed, they are a teaching by historical narration as much as Jesus' meshalim (i.e. parables and aphorisms) are a teaching by fictional stories and sayings.³

The 'sayings' element of a narrative may be heightened by placing relatively less emphasis on Jesus' actions and more on the ensuing dialogue. Examples of this are Jesus' healings on the Sabbath or by a word of forgiveness,⁴ where more attention is given to the hostile

1. Swete, *Appearances*, p. 12. For a reconstruction of the resurrection narratives as a running account, cf. J.W. Wenham, *Easter Enigma* (Exeter: Pater-noster Press, 1984), pp. 81-122. See above, p. 317 n. 1.

2. If one follows Alsup (*Appearance Stories*, pp. 239-49, 263) a third pattern derived from Old Testament theophany texts is observable in the post-resurrection appearance narratives.

3. Cf. the essays of Birger Gerhardsson and David Aune, above.

4. E.g. Mt. 12.9-14; 9.1-8 (nos. 8, 13).

reaction and to Jesus' explanation.¹ Further in this direction are the plucking of grain on the Sabbath or the eating with unwashed hands, where the narrative is reduced to an introduction to the *yelammedenu* midrash that follows.² Thus, with a shift of emphasis the episode can be structured as a narrative proper, as a pronouncement story (apothegm) or as a more extended saying or dialogue.³

A *second pattern* uses biblical quotations and allusions as a kind of frame on which the narrative is built.

Setting + opening quotation + narrative, with biblical texts or
allusions + concluding quotation

It is present in the episodes of the Magi and the flight, the entry and the cleansing, possibly in the Transfiguration and, perhaps most clearly, in the story of Jesus and the Baptist (nos. 29, 31, 33, 34). It may be termed a narrative midrash⁴ in that the story about Jesus is presented as an interpretation or exposition, that is, 'fulfillment' of the cited biblical texts⁵ that frame it. The pattern is also reflected in certain other episodes.⁶ It is probably derived from the formulation of Jesus' biblical exposition in terms of a proem midrash and, in the case of debates with opponents, *yelammedenu* midrash, patterns that are found in more stylized and developed form in the later rabbinic writings.

In conclusion, there are two basic patterns on which the Gospel narratives were formed. With slight alterations the first could be used for a narrative or for a discourse. Even within the narrative episodes the first pattern shifts, as on a sliding scale, between narrative and speech elements. It does not reflect merely common cultural habits

1. Cf. D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone Press, 1956), pp. 170-75.

2. Mt. 12.1-8 par.; 15.1-20 par. Cf. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, pp. 158-59.

3. E.g. the Temptation or the teaching at the house of Simon the Pharisee (Lk. 7.36-50). See Ellis, *Gospel of Luke*. See also nos. 26, 27.

4. See above on Mt. 2.1-23. This is quite different from a haggadic midrash that creates a fictional story out of an Old Testament word or verse. Cf. Ellis, *Early Christianity*, pp. 93ff.

5. They may be previously established *testimonia*. Cf. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, pp. 161-62; *idem*, *Early Christianity*, pp. 100-101.

6. E.g. nos. 7, 8, 9, 27.

nor a conscious dependence on the forms of Hellenistic rhetoric, views that rest on parallels that are at best only secondary, general and indirect.¹ More likely, both patterns have a direct antecedent in (variations on) one or more formulations taught by Jesus and used by his apostolic pupils in the church at Jerusalem, in their several missions and, at length, by the Synoptic evangelists in the composition of their Gospels.

Geographical Settings

Geographical settings are present in 33 of the 43 episodes considered above, including Capernaum and environs (6×),² the northern end of the Lake of Galilee (8×),³ Jerusalem and environs (11×)⁴ and other specific locations (8×).⁵ They are lacking or only vaguely expressed in 10 episodes.⁶ In the Jerusalem episodes most settings are integral to the story; elsewhere they are usually introductory.⁷

Whether the setting of an episode was secondary or was a component of its original formulation is disputed.⁸ If the episodes were first

1. Pace V.K. Robbins, 'The Chreia', in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (ed. D.E. Aune; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 1-23; Mack and Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion*, *passim*, and the literature cited. There are parallels in Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4, 45, and in Josephus, *Ant.* 8.46-49 = 8.2, 5. The former, published in AD 217, has similarities in form to the widow of Nain narrative and may be dependent on it. The latter has little resemblance to the Gospel passages in form or description, and neither do the healing and miracle stories in the rabbinical writings. Cf. *m. Ta'an* 3.7; *b. Ber.* 33a; 34b; *B. Mes.* 59b; *Ta'an.* 19b; 24b-25a. P. Fiebig, *Rabbinische Wundergeschichten. Kleine Texte* 78 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2nd edn, 1933), which I read long ago as a student at Göttingen, gives further examples.

2. Nos. 1, 11, 12, 13 (except Luke) (14 = 21).

3. Nos. 2, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 41.

4. Nos. 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43.

5. Nos. 5, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 31 (32).

6. Nos. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 33, 42. E.g. the setting may be only in 'a synagogue' (nos. 7, 8) or on 'a mountain' (nos. 33, 42) or it may be that of a vaguely-located preceding episode (nos. 73, 6, 10).

7. K. Aland (ed.), *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (Stuttgart: WBA, 13th edn, 1990), is sometimes misleading in this respect, artificially separating the episode from its introductory setting.

8. Contrast Schmidt (*Rahmen*, pp. v, 152) and G. Theissen (*Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989], pp. 13, 103-104, 317) with Schmithals (*Einleitung*, pp. 299-303).

formed and used individually in the congregations, a setting was probably present from the beginning since it would be important for the meaning of the episode. While it was retained by the evangelists in most instances, it could be altered to make it more specific¹ or to remove it.²

Oral or Written Formulation and Transmission

Also disputed is whether these narrative episodes in their pre-canonical history were (1) first formulated and transmitted orally or (2) first formed in writing and transmitted orally (by reading and by memory) or (3) first formulated orally and transmitted orally and in writing. Several factors suggest at least that individual episodes (and groups of them) were put in writing very early, some perhaps during Jesus' ministry, and in any case before they were utilized by the evangelists.³

1. In this respect messianic Judaism, that is, the Jesus movement, had much more in common with the Qumran Covenanters, where there were no inhibitions on writing down religious traditions, than with rabbinic Judaism where oral traditioning was apparently the norm.

2. It had a missionary character that even in Jesus' earthly ministry produced congregations, that is, house groups, separated from the (orally trained) leadership and thus in need of written items of Jesus' teachings.⁴

3. The earliest messianic synagogues not only heard but also read Gospel traditions and other apostolic teachings alongside the reading of Old Testament texts.⁵ By the latter practice, inherited from

1. E.g. Lk. 9.10; ?Mk 6.45.

2. E.g. Lk. 5.17. When individual episodes were joined in a cluster, the setting could be merged into the larger unit.

3. Cf. Ellis, 'New Directions'; Schmithals, *Einleitung*, pp. 318-332.

4. Cf. the essay of Rainer Riesner, above.

5. Reading the Old Testament is presupposed at Rom. 11.2-3; 1 Cor. 6.16; 9.13 ('Do you not know') and 2 Cor. 3.15-16, which contrasts its reading in the Jewish synagogue and, after conversion, in the Christian synagogue; cf. A. Schlatter, *Paulus der Bote Jesu* (Stuttgart: Calver Verlag, 4th edn, 1969 [1931]), pp. 517-18; H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970 [1924]), pp. 122ff. It may also be implied at 2 Cor. 1.13; 1 Tim. 4.13. The reading of Gospel traditions in church is reflected in Mt. 24.15 and Mk 13.14; perhaps in

Judaism,¹ they presupposed the prophetic and canonical, that is, normative authority of the Old Testament.² By reading apostolic writings 'in synagogue', they showed that they also received them as 'Word of God', apparently on a par with the Old Testament.³

4. The 'Word of God' status given to individual Jesus traditions—narratives as well as discourses, combined with their use in Christian synagogues—would have hastened their written production. Jesus' word was no mere targum to be recited orally but was on a par with Scripture and, like Scripture, was to be *read* in the assembly.

5. The more extensive sources behind the Gospels also reflect a written form. A particular evangelist can transpose a piece of an episode to a different place, for example, the temple cleansing in Mark (no. 34); or he can omit a part of an episode that he has treated elsewhere, for example, the question about Elijah in Luke's Transfiguration story (no. 33). If the evangelist were working with oral traditions, this kind of displacement and rearrangement is difficult to conceive. The insertion of 'fulfillment' citations into an episode, for example, the entry to Jerusalem in Matthew (no. 34), also can be best understood on the assumption of a written *Vorlage*.

Some Compositional Tendencies of the Evangelists

Each Synoptic evangelist sometimes altered a narrative by omission or addition in order to fit it to his own scheme of presentation (e.g. nos. 2, 10, 14, 21, 31, 33, 34). Matthew, with his 'prophets and wise men'

Acts 2.42. The same kind of reading of Paul's letters is commanded at 1 Thess. 5.27 and Col. 4.15-16 and is presupposed in 2 Cor. 1.13; Eph. 3.4; 2 Thess. 3.14; and 1 Tim. 4.13. Cf. E.E. Ellis, *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), pp. 97, 137-38. Cf. Rev. 1.3; Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 67, 3.

1. In Judaism only canonical Scripture could be *read* in the synagogue. Even the Aramaic targum, i.e., paraphrastic translation of Scripture, had to be rendered *orally*. Cf. *m. Meg.* 4.4; *t. Meg.* 3.20-21; *b. Meg.* 21b; *Pes. R.* 5, 1; P.S. Alexander, 'Jewish Aramaic Translations of Scripture', in *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, II.1 (ed. S. Safrai; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), p. 238; I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1967 [1931]), pp. 186-90. Cf. also Philo, *Quod omnis probus* 80-82 (regarding the Essenes).

2. On the biblical canon received by Judaism in the first century, cf. Ellis, *Early Christianity*, pp. 3-50.

3. Cf. 2 Thess. 2.15 with 1 Thess. 2.13. On the 'synagogue' characteristics of the earliest Pauline congregations, cf. Ellis, *Pauline Theology*, pp. 129-39.

(13.52; 23.34), goes even further. He excerpts and summarizes the episode of the mute demoniac (no. 3) and re-uses it in his collection of Jesus' miracles (no. 4), and he may possibly do the same with the episode of the blind men (cf. no. 15 with no. 16). He also employs this technique for Jesus' teaching on divorce, where the exposition in the midrash at Mt. 19.3-9 is excerpted, summarized and re-used at Mt. 5.31-32. Matthew also tends to employ a *shaliah* principle in which the actions of agents are subsumed under the person whom they represent.¹

Mark (or his *Vorlage*), sometimes in agreement with Luke, includes in the narrative episodes more elaborate settings (nos. 2, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 23, 25), more dialogue (nos. 2, 6, 14, 34) and reactions of Jesus (nos. 8, 14, 34). In the episode of the Baptist (no. 31) he conflates the opening quotation from Isa. 40.3 with a reference to the coming of Yahweh in judgment (Mal. 3.1). If he uses the same Q *Vorlage* as Matthew and Luke, he may wish thereby to compensate for the omission of subsequent judgment elements in the episode (Mt. 3.7-10, 12 // Lk. 3.7-9, 17). Similarly, in the entry and cleansing (no. 34) he appears to have transposed the cleansing of the temple in order to sandwich it within the fig tree episode (no. 28).²

Luke also can transpose a piece of an episode, for example, the Passion prediction in the Transfiguration (no. 33; Lk. 9.31), or make an insertion, for example, a judgment oracle in the entry and cleansing (no. 34). In addition, he employs yet another significant technique. If he intends to treat or has treated a theme, he seems intentionally to omit a similar episode (or portion of it). For example, he omits the Elijah question at the Transfiguration (no. 33) because of earlier comment (Lk. 1.17; 7.27); the feeding of the four thousand because of a similar feeding story (no. 23); the cursing of the fig tree (no. 28) because of the similar fig tree parable (Lk. 13.6-9). He also omits Jesus' anointing at Bethany (Mt. 26.6-13 par.; Jn 12.1-8) because of his prior episode of the anointing by the prostitute (Lk. 7.36-50); and he skips over the temple question at Jesus' trial that he will treat later in the speech of Stephen (Acts 7.47ff.) and the collection of Acts 19.21 because of a similar event that he narrated earlier (Acts 11.29-30). The death of the Baptist (no. 33) is reduced to

1. See Rengstorff, 'ἀπόστολος'.

2. See p. 326, above.

a sentence (Lk. 9.9), perhaps for other reasons.

Circle(s) Responsible for Forming the Narrative Episodes

Jesus' teachings were given not only by word (e.g. expositions of Scripture illustrated by parabolic meshalim) but also by act + word and by act (healings and nature miracles). They were also formulated and transmitted in these several forms, no one of which can be assigned a definite chronological priority.¹

Given the source-critical assumptions used above, the narrative patterns found in the Gospels were created quite early and in a close-knit circle. Both the basic (nos. 3, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23) and the narrative midrash patterns (nos. 31, 33, 34) are broadly evidenced in T + Q episodes and display a consistency, similarity and limited degree of variation.² These literary phenomena agree with the hypotheses of a careful and cultivated transmission of Jesus traditions advanced by B. Gerhardsson, B. Reicke and R. Riesner,³ and they strongly suggest that (1) the formulation of the Gospel narratives was made soon after the resurrection of Jesus, probably in the thirties, in and near Jerusalem by the same or closely related apostolic circle(s), and that (2) even the compositional variations of the individual evangelists and of their prophetically gifted co-workers were not far removed from that milieu.

1. Cf. Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, p. 11. However, Bultmann regarded the apothegms as more stable in their (folk-tradition) transmission.

2. Note also the similarities in form to the healing narratives at Jn 4.46-54 and Acts 3.1-10; in form and sequence to the nature miracles at Jn 6.1-15, 16-23 (cf. nos. 23, 24).

3. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, pp. 208-61; Reicke, *Roots*, pp. 159-89; Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer*, pp. 408-502.

ORAL TRADITION BEFORE, IN, AND OUTSIDE THE CANONICAL PASSION NARRATIVES

Marion L. Soards

Both the Passion Narratives (hereafter, PNs) and references to the Passion of Christ which are preserved in early Christian writings, canonical and extra-biblical, are testimony to the vitality of oral tradition in the early life of the Church. Perhaps the first written reference to the oral tradition of the Passion in early Christianity is Paul's rhetorical question in Gal. 3.1, ὦ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται, τίς ὑμᾶς ἐβάσκανεν, οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος; ('O foolish Galatians, who bewitched you—before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly set forth as having been crucified?'). Paul's impassioned remark points to the central theme of his preaching, but it indicates that Paul proclaimed more than *that* Jesus Christ was crucified (a possible understanding of texts such as 1 Cor. 2.2) or, taking one small interpretative step, *that* he died for the sins of humanity (e.g. 1 Cor. 15.3). The striking reminiscence of Jesus Christ's having been publicly set forth crucified before the eyes of the Galatians employs verbs and the metaphor of seeing which denote vivid, even graphic portrayal beyond the mere statement of fact or the terse character of creedal formulation.¹ Unfortunately, Paul neither amplifies nor illustrates this preaching of Jesus Christ's being crucified, so that one is unable to reconstruct the apostle's

1. On this point see H.D. Betz (*Galatians* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979], pp. 131-32), who locates Paul's remark in the context of the 'rhetorical tradition' wherein 'one of the goals. . . was to deliver [the] speech so vividly and impressively that [the] listeners imagined the matter to have happened right before their eyes'. Betz's discussion refers to 'all kinds of techniques. . . to achieve the effect, including impersonations and even holding up painted pictures'. He offers extensive documentation from ancient rhetoricians.

preaching of the Passion. At other points in his writings, however, we do learn of certain of the events of the Passion of which Paul had knowledge, and which he *could* (and likely did?) narrate in his preaching. These include (1) that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11.23-26); (2) that he was betrayed (1 Cor. 11.23); (3) that the betrayal took place at night (1 Cor. 11.23); (4) that Jesus was crucified (Gal. 3.1); (5) that Jesus died (1 Cor. 11.26); and (6) that Jesus was buried (Rom. 6.4). Thus, in what are likely the earliest preserved pieces of Christian writing, one finds evidence of the oral tradition of the Passion of Christ.

In the remainder of this essay I shall attempt to illustrate further the phenomenon of oral tradition concerning the PNs by examining selected texts. First, I shall make the case that oral PN traditions existed prior to the composition of the canonical Gospels. Secondly, I shall show that oral tradition influenced the evangelists as they wrote their accounts. And thirdly, I shall argue that oral PN traditions persisted long after the composition of the canonical Gospels and that these traditions continued to influence the minds of later Christian authors as they reflected on the Passion of Christ.

1. *Oral Tradition before the Canonical PNs*

From the advent of form criticism, interpreters contended that prior to the composition of the first written Gospel there existed a fairly well-formed, perhaps even definitely set, version of the PN. The expanse of time between the death of Jesus in AD 30/33 and the writing of the first Gospel in the mid-60s to 70 required a process of oral transmission of tradition. Comparison of the PN to the other stories and sections of the Gospels found the PN to be an extended, logically progressive sequence of scenes which were interconnected and even dependent upon one another in forming a larger coherent account. By contrast, the portions of the Gospels prior to the PN were short, seemingly independent units which could be, and perhaps were, arranged in whatever order the evangelists desired. Moreover, whereas the pericopae composing the account of Jesus' ministry prior to the Passion could stand alone and communicate a purposeful message, certain elements of the PN had no discernible function outside of the larger account and seemed unlikely ever to have existed independently. Although there has never been consensus about where

the pre-Gospel PN began, items seemingly incapable of an independent existence included the brief memory of Judas' agreement to betray Jesus, the mention of the young man who fled naked from Jesus' arrest, Simon Peter's denials of Jesus, the Barabbas incident, and the reference to Simon of Cyrene. In isolation from the other PN material interpreters did not believe that such items would have been preserved.¹

The contentions of the early form critics have undergone serious criticism by scholars attempting to disprove the existence of a pre-Gospels PN.² Yet there are many scholars who, although dubious about the numerous and different, but precise, reconstructions of the pre-Gospels PNs, still find the basic logic of the argument for a pre-Gospels PN persuasive.³ While this important interpretative issue may never be settled finally, one should not miss the central agreement by all parties in this controversy, viz. all agree there were PN traditions in early Christianity prior to the composition of the Gospels; otherwise we would seek to identify the author of the PN fiction.

2. Oral Tradition in the PNs

Without attempting to settle the issues of the existence and shape of a

1. R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 262-84; and V. Taylor, *The Gospel according to St Mark: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indexes* (London: Macmillan, 2nd edn, 1966), pp. 524-602, esp. 524-26.

2. J.R. Donahue, *Are You the Christ? The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS, 10; Missoula, MT: SBL, 1973).

3. For a summary of the position of over thirty scholars' positions on this question, the majority of whom subscribe to some form of the pre-Gospels PN, see M.L. Soards, 'The Question of a PreMarkan Passion Narrative', *Bible Bhashyam* 11 (1985), pp. 144-69.

In addition to scholars arguing for a pre-Markan PN, a large number of interpreters contend that Luke had still another pre-Gospels PN which was used in addition and often in preference to the Gospel according to Mark. The discussion of this topic is illustrated by two recent studies. One by M.L. Soards (*The Passion according to Luke: The Special Material of Luke 22* [JSNTSup, 14; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987]) denies Luke's use of a coherent narrative beyond Mark; another by J.B. Green (*The Death of Jesus: Tradition and Interpretation in the Passion Narrative* [WUNT, 2.33; Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988]) contends Luke did possess a PN source in addition to that in Mark.

pre-Gospels PN or PNs, one may ask whether there is evidence in the PNs of the Gospels of the oral tradition(s) from the period prior to the writing of the Gospels. Since it is beyond the scope of this essay to offer a comprehensive analysis of the possible traces of oral tradition(s) in the PNs, I shall make two kinds of observations that speak for the existence and influence of oral tradition on the PNs of the Gospels (including, as possible, the *Gospel of Peter*). First, I shall list prominent special materials (not including every unique feature) found only in one of the five Gospels under consideration, the plethora of which suggests an active interest in the Passion of Jesus and implies steady elaboration of the most basic story. Secondly, I shall take portions of one PN scene as a test case in probing for evidence of oral tradition. The passage which I shall analyze is the description of events in the 'garden of Gethsemane',¹ especially the accounts of Jesus' prayer and of his arrest.²

Special Materials of the Gospels

When one encounters a story element in a single Gospel, it is possible that the item is a mere invention of the evangelist; yet, from observing several such features in each of the Gospels, one suspects that the evangelists are drawing upon more than their imaginations. Volume of particularity is no guarantee of dependence on oral tradition(s), but the more unique features an evangelist incorporates into the PN the more likely he is to be relying upon some external stimulus rather than sheer inventiveness. That many story-items are preserved in a single Gospel is not by itself a forceful argument for the influence of oral tradition on the evangelists, but when coupled with additional evidence this phenomenon may enhance the strength of a case for the

1. Mark and Matthew read 'Gethsemane', Luke reads 'the Mount of Olives', and John refers to 'a garden' located 'across the Kidron valley'. Thus, 'the garden of Gethsemane' is a popular conflation.

2. I wish to thank the Rev. Raymond E. Brown who generously shared 75 typescript pages of his forthcoming work, *The Death of the Messiah*, with me. This portion of Brown's study focused on Mk 15.38; Mt. 27.51-53; Lk. 23.45b (although, as Brown points out, the order of the Lukan narrative is different from that of the other Synoptics); and the *Gospel of Peter* 5.20-6.22; 10.41-42. His method of recognizing the probable presence of oral tradition behind and, now, in the Gospels' PN was extremely helpful as I went about this study of related texts.

existence and influence of oral tradition on the formation and transmission of the PNs.

In Matthew's account one finds (1) Jesus' questioning of Judas after he is kissed; (2) the story of the death of Judas; (3) the story of Pilate's wife; (4) Pilate's washing his hands and the accompanying cry of the people; (5) the offer of wine mixed with gall; (6) the signs after Jesus' death; and (7) the posting of a guard at the tomb.

In Mark's PN alone one reads of (1) the young man who fled nude from Jesus' arrest; (2) the offer of wine mixed with myrrh (similar to Matthew, but not exactly the same); and (3) Pilate's confirmation of Jesus' death.

Luke offers still other items, including (1) Jesus' confronting Judas and apparently preventing the kiss; (2) the presence of the Jewish leaders at Jesus' arrest; (3) Jesus' healing of the man whose ear was cut off; (4) Jesus' being mocked as he waits at the home of the high priest; (5) the morning assembly of the Jewish leaders to consider Jesus' fate; (6) Jesus before Herod Antipas; (7) Jesus and the daughters of Jerusalem; (8) two or three words of Jesus from the cross;¹ (9) the report of the exchange between Jesus and those with whom he was crucified; (10) the reaction of the assembled crowds who watch and see Jesus' death; and (11) the mention of the acquaintances being present with the women and seeing the crucifixion.

John's narrative is even more distinguished by its special materials: (1) the exchange between Jesus and the crowd that came to arrest him, including his saying *ἐγὼ εἰμι* and their falling to the ground; (2) the details that Simon Peter wielded the sword and that Malchus lost his ear; (3) the soldiers' seizing Jesus; (4) another disciple's accompanying Peter to the house of the high priest; (5) Jesus' being interrogated by the high priest, Annas; (6) the officer striking Jesus for his answer to the high priest and Jesus' words to the officer; (7) Annas sending Jesus bound to Caiaphas; (8) conversations between Jesus and Pilate; (9) Pilate and the Jews in dialogue; (10) the declaration by the Jews, 'We have no King but Caesar'; (11) Jesus' bearing of his own cross; (12) three words of Jesus from the cross; (13) the Jews' request that Jesus' legs be broken (but he is already dead, so that his side is

1. The uncertainty about the number of Lukan 'last words' is of course the result of the notorious textual problem concerning the authenticity of Lk. 23.34a.

pierced); and (14) Nicodemus' bringing 100 pounds of spices to use in burying Jesus.

The *Gospel of Peter*, though a fragment, offers a PN plot with elements similar to those of the canonical accounts; but this Gospel contains many striking ideas and additional story elements, including (1) Herod being cast as a law-observant Jew; (2) Herod being also a king; (3) Herod seeming to have authority over Pilate; (4) the people executing Jesus; (5) Jesus, both as subject and object throughout this narrative, being referred to as 'the Lord'; (6) as he is mocked, Jesus being challenged, 'Judge righteously!'; (7) the placard over Jesus reading, 'This is the King of Israel', and seeming to be posted by the people; (8) the crucified Jesus being said to have 'held his peace, as if he felt no pain'; (9) one malefactor railing at those crucifying the Lord, because he does not deserve it; (10) the darkness *per se* motivating the anxiety of the executioners, since he was still alive, and if the sun had set they would be in violation of the law; (11) the action of giving Jesus gall with vinegar which completes the Jewish sin, but is not related to the fulfillment of a messianic prophecy in the narrative; (12) Jesus crying, 'My power, O power, thou hast forsaken me'; (13) the earth quaking when the body of the dead Jesus is placed upon it; (14) the Jews handing the body over to Joseph; (15) the Jews and the leaders lamenting their evil and relating it explicitly to 'the [forthcoming] end of Jerusalem'; (16) the reader being informed, as if by Peter, that the disciples hid, fasted, mourned, and wept; (17) the leaders asking Pilate for a guard for the tomb because they say they know 'he' was righteous and, now, they fear the wrathful remorse of the people; (18) 'Petronius the centurion with soldiers' watching the tomb; (19) them all rolling a great stone over the tomb's entrance; (20) seven seals being set on the tomb; and (21) the guards pitching tents at the site.¹

1. Although the remainder of the story goes beyond the material which most scholars designate 'the PN' of the canonical Gospels, the striking material in the *Gospel of Peter* makes listing the additional elements worthwhile: (22) on the dawn of the Sabbath a great crowd from Jerusalem and the country around come out to see the tomb; (23) a voice from heaven speaks in the night; (24) the guards see the heavens open, two men come down, the stone rolls itself away, and both 'young men' enter the tomb; (25) next, the guards see three men come out of the tomb—the heads of two reached heaven and the head of the man in the middle, who was borne by the others, surpassed the heavens—a cross followed the three; (26) the voice from

No hard and fast conclusion comes from observing these items in the Gospel PNs. But, whatever theory of Synoptic interrelatedness one holds, clearly there is additional material incorporated into the PN by the subsequent evangelists; and, in turn, whatever, if any, the relationship of the Fourth Gospel and the *Gospel of Peter* to the Synoptics, the authors of those Gospels also offer a wealth of additional PN material. While each of these unique items in the earliest PNs would require individual analysis to determine whether the material is more likely to result from the influence of oral tradition or from the author's own meditation and composition, it seems highly unlikely to me that all of these added traditions were the results of the authors' meditations. In the following section the reason for this suspicion should become clear.

Events in the Garden of Gethsemane

I shall focus on the materials in Mk 14.32-50 and the parallel portions of Matthew, Luke, and John. Here, agreements rather than the quantity of uniqueness point to oral traditions. Again, this survey is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, and I shall examine three items which suggest the influence of oral tradition on the formation of this portion of the Gospels' PNs.

First, the complex Synoptic scene where Jesus goes and comes from the sleeping disciples in order to pray that the cup may pass from him has no strict parallel in John, although as we will see there are curious parallels between a scene in John 12 and the Synoptic Gethsemane/Mount of Olives scene. In addition, in Heb. 5.7, one reads of Christ, God's Son, a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek,

ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας
πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς

heaven declares, 'Thou hast preached to them that sleep'; (27) the cross spoke, 'Yea'; (28) again, the guards see the heavens open, a man descend, and enter the tomb; (29) the soldiers report to Pilate, saying, 'In truth he was the Son of God'; (30) Pilate reiterates Jesus' innocence; (31) all (the Jewish leaders?) urge Pilate to keep the matter quiet, saying they would rather sin against God than suffer the wrath of the people; (32) Pilate agrees to the silence; (33) Mary Magdalene and 'her women friends' come to the tomb to weep; (34) they desire to enter the tomb in order to weep and to lament; and, then, (35) in a final section the narrative focuses on the disciples, esp. Simon Peter, who as narrator mentions himself, Andrew, Levi . . . and the fragment ends.

ισχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς
εὐλαβείας.

Interpreters debate the amount of precise correlation between this reminiscence of Jesus' life and the Gethsemane scenes of the Synoptics.¹ Yet, it may be that this rather abstract epistolary (perhaps previously creedal) formulation reflects an early oral tradition, which itself could have provided inspiration for early Christians who sought to supply an answer to the puzzling question, 'What did Jesus pray in the garden of Gethsemane?'

In turn, notice in Mk 14.34 and Mt. 26.38 that Jesus says, *περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου*. In a similar line in Jn 12.27, Jesus says, *νῦν ἡ ψυχὴ μου τετάρακται, καὶ τί εἶπω; πᾶτερ, σῶσόν με ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης; ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ὥραν ταύτην*.² Both the two Synoptic Gospels and John seem to be alluding to Ps. 41.6, 12 (LXX), *ἵνα τί περίλυπος εἶ, ψυχὴ, καὶ ἵνα τί συνταράσσεις με*. Yet the Synoptics work with the first portion of the Psalm-text, whereas John forms his allusion using the second part of the verse. Strikingly, in both the Synoptic scene and the Johannine account, Jesus is moved to speak of his sorrowful or troubled soul because he is facing squarely the fact that his 'hour' has come. The verse from John itself includes a mention of the hour, but in the Synoptics one finds Jesus saying either, 'The hour has come' (Mk 14.41), or, 'Behold, the hour is at hand' (Mt. 26.45), only after his anguished prayer that the cup be removed, if it is God's will. In sharp contrast, in Jn 12.27, after admitting that his soul was troubled, Jesus resolutely refuses to pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'. Yet in Mk 14.36 ('Abba, Father') and in Mt. 26.39 ('My Father'), Jesus prayed for the cup of his death to be removed.

Moreover, in Jn 12.28, after having refused to pray to be saved

1. H.W. Attridge (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989], p. 148) argues, 'It is impossible to know what reminiscence of Jesus, if any, inspired this verse'. He notes that the details of this verse and the contents of the Synoptic stories are poorly matched. While, he remarks that 'it may derive from some divergent Gethsemane tradition', he is skeptical about the identification of a background for this statement. For defenders of the correlation of Heb. 5.7 with the Synoptic Gethsemane, see Attridge's extensive notes.

2. For a brief, prudent, but highly suggestive treatment of the Johannine passage in relation to the Synoptic PNs, see R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, I (AB, 29 and 29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), pp. 470-71.

from his hour, Jesus does pray, *πάτερ, δόξασόν σου τὸ ὄνομα*. Then, the Father's voice from heaven answers Jesus; and hearing it, some said it had thundered and others said an angel had spoken to him. The prayer attributed to Jesus reminds one of the opening line(s) of the prayer attributed to Jesus in Mt. 6.9-13 and Lk. 11.2-4 (*πάτερ... ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου*). Remarkably, in the Synoptics, both in the lines of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane and in the lines which he speaks to the sleeping disciples, one hears echoes of other lines of 'the Lord's Prayer', especially as it is recorded in Matthew's version. The following table illustrates this point, initially giving the line from the Lord's Prayer and then grouping the comparable lines from the Synoptic PNs.

Mt. 6.10b	<i>πάτερ . . . γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου</i>
Mk 14.36	<i>αββα ὁ πατήρ . . . οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ</i>
Mt. 26.39	<i>πάτερ μου . . . οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ</i>
Lk. 22.42	<i>πάτερ . . . μὴ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γινέσθω</i>
Mt. 6.13a	<i>καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν</i>
Mk 14.38	<i>προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ ἔλθῃτε εἰς πειρασμόν</i>
Mt. 26.41	<i>προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε εἰς πειρασμόν</i>
Lk. 22.45	<i>προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε εἰς πειρασμόν</i>

Furthermore, the idea of some members of the crowd in Jn 12.29, that an angel spoke to Jesus, finds a loose parallel in at least one, and perhaps two, of the Synoptic PNs. At his arrest in Matthew's PN, Jesus rebukes his sword-swinging disciple, commanding him to put away his weapon and telling him that, should Jesus ask his Father, the Father would immediately send him more than twelve legions of angels (Mt. 26.53). Also, in the disputed passage in Lk. 22.43-44, when Jesus is at prayer, an angel appears and strengthens him so that he prays all the more fervently. Whether this passage is authentic or an early legendary addition by a scribe, it once again shows the association of an angel with the time of Jesus' facing his hour and the act of his praying to his Father.

Finally, in the Synoptic PNs, the praying Jesus refers to his impending death as *τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο*—see Mk 14.36; Mt. 26.39; and Lk. 22.4 (there, however, *τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον*). The metaphor of the 'cup' for Jesus' death occurs in Luke's version of the Last/Lord's Supper (Lk. 22.20) and, elsewhere in the Synoptics, in a dialogue between Jesus and the sons of Zebedee (Mt. 20.22-23; Mk 10.38-39).

Strikingly, in John there is neither a Last Supper with eucharistic words of institution of the Lord's Supper nor a prayer in the garden for Jesus' death to pass. Normally, throughout John, Jesus (and the evangelist) refer(s) to his appointed death as his ὥρα—see, for example, 12.27, 13.1. But, at his arrest, when he reprimands Peter for using the sword, Jesus says, βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην· τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ οὐ μὴ πίω αὐτό. . .

Thus, in both the Synoptics and John one observes a striking cluster of ideas and words: (1) Jesus' soul is distressed; (2) he faces 'the hour'; (3) he prays to his/the Father, asking—or, not asking—to be saved; (4) he calls for God's will to be done; (5) he directs his disciples to prayer that they may avoid temptation; (6) there is an association of an angel or angels with Jesus' facing his hour and his praying; and (7) there is the reference to Jesus' death as his cup. That these ideas and words are present in the remarkably different scenes in the Synoptics and John surely suggests the existence of an oral tradition behind the accounts.¹

Whatever its original form, this oral tradition has been developed differently by the evangelists. Indeed, the conspicuous diversity among the Synoptics and John makes it at least possible that the enigmatic reminiscence in Heb. 5.7 is an independent representation of the same oral tradition. If so, it would illustrate both the remarkable flexibility and powerful influence of oral tradition in early Christian reflection on Jesus' Passion.

The second and third items which suggest the existence and influence of oral tradition on the formation of the Gospel PNs both occur in the scene of Jesus' arrest.² The second article is an agreement in story-telling between Matthew and Luke, not present in Mark or John. Mt. 26.50 and Lk. 22.48 both have Jesus speak directly to Judas at the

1. In treating Jn 12.20-29, R. Schnackenburg (*The Gospel according to St John*, II [3 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1968-82], pp. 380-90) lists several features which John has in common with the Synoptic PNs (pp. 386-87). Schnackenburg judges Jn 12.20-36 to be the work of the evangelist, who used 'some "synoptic logia"' and 'the Mount of Olives scene' (p. 380). He also concludes, 'The account of Jesus [*sic*] agony and his submission to the Father's will comes from the tradition' (p. 386); and, that an angel spoke to Jesus, has support in the angel of Lk 22.43. The source may have mentioned the angel, or the evangelist may know this detail through oral tradition' (p. 390).

2. The discussion of these two items is adapted from my *Passion*, pp. 73 and 99.

time of the arrest. In both Gospels Jesus asks Judas a question. The form of the questions is not at all alike:

Matthew	ἐταῖρε, ἐφ' ὃ πᾶρει;
Luke	Ἰούδα, φιλήματι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδως;

The contexts in Matthew and Luke in which Jesus questions Judas are also different. In Matthew Judas comes up to Jesus and says, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kisses Jesus. Then Jesus questions Judas, and the members of the crowd arrest Jesus. In Luke, Judas draws near to Jesus to kiss him; Jesus poses his question; then, the unnamed disciple strikes with the sword. Amid the marked differences in the narratives of Matthew and Luke, the factual agreement that Jesus questioned Judas is striking. In assessing this parallel, J. Finegan¹ argued that Matthew and Luke both knew *that* Jesus spoke to Judas, but he insisted that the two accounts were otherwise entirely different. Given the different forms of the question and the different narrative contexts, his judgment appears correct. Thus, the similarities and dissimilarities between Matthew and Luke are best accounted for as evidence of the continued influence of oral tradition alongside and upon the work of the evangelists.

The third element indicating oral tradition behind and in the Gospel PNs is an agreement between Matthew, Luke, and John, not present in Mark's PN. Mt. 26.52-54, Lk. 22.51, and Jn 18.11 all have Jesus rebuke his disciples after one of them strikes the servant of the high priest with a sword. Jesus' words are very different in the three Gospels.

Matthew	ἀπόστρεψον τὴν μάχαιράν σου εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτῆς· πάντες γὰρ οἱ λαβόντες μάχαιραν ἐν μαχαίρῃ ἀπολοῦνται. ἢ δοκεῖς ὅτι οὐ δύναμαι παρακαλέσαι τὸν πατέρα μου, καὶ παραστήσει μοι ἄρτι πλείω δώδεκα λεγιῶνας ἀγγέλων; πῶς οὖν πληρωθῶσιν αἱ γραφαὶ ὅτι οὕτως δεῖ γενέσθαι . . .
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Luke	ἔατε ἕως τούτου.
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John	βάλε τὴν μάχαιραν εἰς τὴν θήκην· τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ οὐ μὴ πῶ αὐτό.
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1. *Die Überlieferung der Leidens- und Auferstehungsgeschichte Jesu* (BZNW, 15; Giessen: Töpelmann, 1934), p. 20.

For this agreement, again, the narrative contexts in which the reprimands are issued are different. In Matthew, before the rebuke, the crowd had already seized Jesus; then, after he scolds the unnamed disciple, he turns to confront the crowd for their actions. In Luke no one has touched Jesus, but one learns from Luke that Jesus' followers see what was about to occur, so they ask whether they should strike with the sword; but before Jesus answers, the unnamed disciple strikes the blow. After Jesus orders the disciple to desist from his defending, he touches and heals the wounded man's ear; and, then, he turns to confront the Jewish leaders who, according to Luke, were present at the arrest. John's account is very different. Judas appears with soldiers as well as a group from the chief priests and Pharisees. Jesus steps forth and confronts the crowd. He says, 'I am', and the arrest-party recoils and falls to the ground. Jesus continues speaking, arranging the release of his followers. Then, 'Simon Peter' cuts off 'the right ear' of 'Malchus'. After Jesus rebukes him, the soldiers and the others seize Jesus.

Jesus' statements *per se*¹ and the narrative contexts in which they are located are so different from one Gospel to the other that one cannot understand the evangelists to depend upon a common written source. More likely, in the re-telling of the story of the arrest of Jesus, oral tradition had developed in such a way that it became known *that* Jesus rebuked his disciple(s). In turn, each evangelist worked from the oral tradition to fill out what Jesus had said.

3. *Oral Tradition outside and after the Gospel PNs*

In the course of telling the story of the Church from the era of the

1. It is curious that the initial lines of Jesus' rebuke in Matthew and John are both similar but very different from Luke. Regularly in the PN Luke and John share information, so that interpreters frequently suggest these two evangelists either knew each other or possessed common tradition(s). Matthew and John, however, are rarely associated. See, for example, I. Buse, 'The Cleansing of the Temple in the Synoptics and John', *ExpTim* 70 (1958), pp. 22-24; *idem*, 'St John and the Passion Narratives of St Matthew and St Luke', *NTS* 7 (1960-61), pp. 65-76; H. Klein, 'Die lukanisch-johanneische Passionstradition', *ZNW* 67 (1976), pp. 155-86; E. Osty, 'Les points de contact entre les récits de la passion dans Saint Luc et Saint Jean', *RSR* 39 (1951), pp. 146-54; and P. Parker, 'Luke and the Fourth Evangelist', *NTS* 9 (1962-63), pp. 317-36.

apostles to his own time, Eusebius cites a passage from the preface to the treatise of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor in the early second century. Papias wrote, 'And I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well. . . I inquired into the words of the presbyters . . . For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice' (*Hist. eccl.* 3.39.2-4). Eusebius employs this statement to illustrate that Papias had neither heard nor seen the apostles themselves, but for considering the continued existence and influence of oral tradition in early Christianity one may put this remark to a different, but helpful, use. In brief, Papias declared that he knew and used written materials, but he preferred oral tradition and gave it priority to the point that he freely modified or supplemented the written materials with the oral. A relatively brief survey of other early Christian authors who wrote or commented on the PN suggests that for several centuries after the writing of the Gospels, and even after the canon began to take a clear shape, Christians continued to do exactly what Papias states that he did. Consider the following:

1. From around the turn of the first century, the author of *Barnabas* offers a typological reflection on the significance of Jesus' death. First, the author employs the metaphor from the OT of the 'scapegoat' to interpret Jesus' death, and, in turn, the death is explicated in relation to the 'heifer'. Here, the degree of the author's creativity is perhaps impossible to assess, as is often the case with the literature we shall examine in the remainder of this survey.

2. About the same time Ignatius (*Trall.* 9.1) wrote that Jesus 'was crucified and died, with those in heaven and on the earth and under the earth looking on'.¹ He may simply be blending the Pauline image and language of Phil. 2.6-11 with his remark about the crucifixion, although there is the possibility that a more elaborate oral tradition concerning the PN has influenced him.

3. Slightly later, the *Odes of Solomon* 28 meditates poetically on the Passion from Christ's point of view. The story is enhanced with scriptural language and imagery from texts beyond the PN, although

1. I am indebted to R.E. Brown for this citation. Brown suggests an interpretation different from the simple 'Pauline' explanation in his forthcoming work, *The Death of the Messiah*.

there is no explicit elaboration of the basic plot.

4. Again, roughly in the same time-frame, Justin Martyr (*Apol.* 35) wrote that 'Jesus Christ stretched forth his hands, being crucified by the Jews speaking against him, and denying that he was the Christ. . . they tormented him, and set him on the judgment-seat, and said, Judge us'. The idea of Christ's being 'tormented' and called on by his executioners to 'judge' them is similar to the scene in the *Gospel of Peter* (3.7) where Jesus is mocked by those saying, 'Judge righteously!' The origin of Justin's story is obscure, although in the rest of this passage he shows no sign of having been influenced by the *Gospel of Peter*, so that he may show knowledge of an oral tradition. Also, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (98-106) Justin offers a rich blending of the events of the Gospels' PNs with Psalm 22 as a whole. Justin's meditation fuses the PN and the Psalm, so that one could understand that all of Psalm 22 was 'said' during Christ's Passion, although only the opening verse is quoted overtly. Though Justin is not explicitly dependent upon oral tradition here (this does not exclude the possibility that he is influenced by an oral tradition), his work illustrates the living tendency to incorporate additional material into the basic PN.

5. From about AD 170 one finds a similar, though more elaborate, tendency in Melito of Sardis's *Homily on the Passion*. The sermon focuses on the Passover, especially the lamb, as a type which is now fulfilled in Christ. Melito achieves a thorough integration of the Passover and the Passion, moving from one to the other in pursuit of the purpose of finding the meaning of the Passover in relation to Christ's Passion. The Passover becomes a work of preparation, so that the angel of death saw 'the life of the Lord in the sacrifice of the sheep, the type of the Lord in the death of the sheep' (33). Melito assumes Israel to be the actor in Christ's crucifixion (79). And, focusing on the horror of the cross, Melito writes, 'For this reason the lights of heaven turned away. . . with his body naked. . . the earth trembled' (97-98). In the same passage Melito introduces the idea that the people did not rip their clothes at Jesus' death, but an angel did (98). This statement possibly reflects an oral tradition and is a legendary explanation of the meaning of the rending of the 'temple veil' at Jesus' death.

6. From approximately Melito's time, *The Ascents of James* (Pseudo-Clementines 1.41.3) informs us of the suffering of the whole

world with Jesus: the sun, the stars, the sea, and the mountains were affected; graves were opened; and the veil of the temple was rent as a kind of lament over the impending destruction of the place.¹

7. From around the end of the second century, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (11) focuses on the prophet's vision of 'the Lord', i.e., Jesus. There is some legendary information about his birth and infancy, and after a notice that he performed great signs and wonders in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem (11.18), three lines treat the Passion (and resurrection):

19 And after this the adversary envied him and roused the children of Israel against him, not knowing who he was, and they delivered him to the king and crucified him, and he descended to the angel (of the underworld). 20 In Jerusalem indeed I saw how he was crucified on the tree, 21 and how he was raised after three days and remained (still many) days.²

8. In the late second or early third century, Tertullian vividly retells the story of the Passion (*Apol.* 21.15-26). He heightens the drama by offering commentary throughout the story, and at times he goes beyond the narrative to include popular traditions (oral?) which were then current. For example, 'This whole story of Christ was reported to Caesar (at that time it was Tiberius) by Pilate, himself in his secret heart already a Christian' (24). In another context (*Adv. Marc.* 4.42.5) Tertullian explains the rending of the temple veil as the departure of an angel leaving the daughter of Jerusalem.³

9. *Didascalia* 21.5.17-19 (early third century) tells the story of the Passion in order to locate the basis of Christian piety, especially fasting, in various Paschal practices. The author's basic sources are clearly the PNs of Matthew and Luke; but the narrative may reflect the influence of *Gospel of Peter* 1 or oral tradition, since, after Pilate washes his hands, one reads, 'Herod commanded that he should be crucified'.⁴

1. Again, I owe thanks to Brown for this reference

2. Text from J. Flemming and H. Duensing, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, in E. Hennecke and W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, II (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 662.

3. Brown brought this passage from *Adv. Marc.* to my attention.

4. R.H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), pp. 87-90.

10. Julius Africanus (*The Epistle to Aristides* 18.1), writing in the first half of the third century, reports the circumstances connected with Christ's Passion. He elaborates the basic PN, but it is difficult to determine whether he is simply dramatizing the story or reflects the influence of oral tradition. For example, he writes, 'On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down'.

11. The *Gospel of Nicodemus*, itself from the early fifth century, contains the *Acts of Pilate*, which has been dated as early as the mid-second century, but as late as the early fourth. In the *Acts* (1–16) one finds an ornate version of the PN. The story begins with the Jewish leaders assembling and going to Pilate to request the execution of Jesus, and it continues through the end of the PN (the tomb). The author shows clear knowledge of Matthew, Luke, and John (and perhaps Mark). The narrative blends the elements of the Gospels into a selective harmony, but the author offers two kinds of fresh materials. First, as he recounts basic PN scenes he gives additional details beyond the material of the canonical PNs: for example, the names of the two robbers crucified with Jesus, and the name of the centurion or soldier who pierced Jesus' side. Secondly, the author records whole new and elaborate scenes.

This marked tendency to add details and even scenes to the PN became the normal manner of recounting the story of Jesus' death.¹ The PN was told often. Given the tendencies we have observed in the literature we have studied and given the natural restrictions related to ancient written materials, throughout the early centuries of the life of the Church, the PN was likely more often told than written, more often heard than read, more often known than held. The process of elaboration was *normal*. The difficulty for the interpreter confronting the evidences of this process is twofold: (1) one must determine whether the additions are creations of the authors or reflections of oral

1. E.g. Alexander of Alexandria, *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* 6 (early fourth century); Eusebius, *Demonstratio Evangelica* 10 (late third or early fourth century); *Apostolic Constitutions* 5.3.14 (latter half of the fourth century); and *The Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea* (difficult to date, legendary, oldest manuscript from the twelfth century).

traditions, and (2) one must assess the antiquity of the traditions when they are present. This conclusion does not bring us to the end of the road in studying oral tradition *behind, in, and outside* the PN; but it points the way for the next phase of the investigation of this question.

JOHN AND THE ORAL GOSPEL TRADITION

James D.G. Dunn

1. *Introduction: The Final Form of the Johannine Tradition*

In a previous paper on John's Gospel, for a symposium which was also concerned to shed light on the tradition behind the Gospels, I found it necessary to spend all the time in the preliminary task of clarifying the historical context and character of the Fourth Gospel.¹ The reason is obvious: the 'primary' context of the material within the Gospel is the Gospel itself. Only when we have understood it within that context will we be able to undertake any systematic study of its earlier forms. If the evangelist has used his material to address contemporary needs and concerns, and if that usage has shaped and moulded the material in any degree, we need to be aware of these needs and concerns and how they may have shaped the material, in order to make allowance for the evangelist's redaction and editorial work. Since any attempt to penetrate 'below the surface' is a hazardous business, with firm criteria usually lacking, we need to have as many checks and controls as possible in place before we begin, and one of the main checks and controls is a clear perspective on why and how the evangelist used the material available to him.

I hope I was successful, or as successful as our state of knowledge of the period allows. Certainly I will need to assume the findings of that earlier paper if we are to make any progress on this one! My conclusions so far as they bear upon our present concern can be summed up thus.

1. 'Let John be John: A Gospel for its Time', in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (WUNT, 28; ed. P Stuhlmacher, Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1983), pp. 309-39. ET, *The Gospel and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 293-322.

1. John's Gospel was written in the late first century, in a context where he was in dialogue with other strands of the Judaism of the period, including apocalyptic and mystical strands, and most polemically with the emerging rabbinic authorities ('the Jews' of 9.22 and elsewhere).

2. His main concern was to portray Jesus as the embodiment of divine Wisdom, as the one who reveals God in a full and final way, and who therefore has supplemented and shown to be inadequate any other claims to knowledge of God and of heavenly things.

3. In so doing he has given the Christology of his Gospel its characteristic and distinctive emphases, which both develop the christology of the earlier NT writers and reflect the concerns these dialogues share with the other strands of late first-century Judaism—including, not least, the thorough-going portrayal of the Son sent from the Father, conscious of his pre-existence, the talk of the descending-ascending Son of Man, and the profundity of the 'I am' sayings. All this has been put in a framework of signs correlated with often elaborate dialogues and discourses which are both characteristically and distinctively Johannine, and markedly different from the characteristic teaching style of the Synoptics, and which therefore have to be attributed almost entirely to the evangelist rather than to his tradition, or at least to its earlier forms. This is fairly standard critical evaluation of the Fourth Gospel and I trust I do not need to elaborate it further here.¹ But it can be complemented now by the effective analysis of the literary design of the Gospel by Alan Culpepper, who has succeeded better than most in making us aware of the unity and coherence, in terms of thematic development, spectrum of character and subtle comment, stamped upon the material by the author.²

At the same time I pointed out how many roots of this developed tradition are still visible in the Fourth Gospel. For example, geogra-

1. This of course is not to deny that the Synoptics are also theological presentations of Jesus; but simply to point up the self-evident fact that John's theological reworking of earlier material is more thoroughgoing and more far-reaching than in the Synoptics. For a popular treatment of John's Christology which makes my point more fully, see my book *The Evidence for Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1985), ch. 2.

2. A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

phical details like 'Aenon near Salim' (3.23), the pool of Bethzatha (5.2), and 'a town called Ephraim' (11.54), serve no discernible theological purpose and can be reckoned as part of the historical reminiscence from which such passages as these developed. The parallel traditions regarding John the Baptist, the calling of the first disciples, the cleansing of the Temple, the healing miracles, the feeding of the five thousand, and the Passion narrative overlap to such a degree with their Synoptic counterparts that it would be churlish to deny their historical rootage in the same or very similar earliest memories of Jesus' ministry. And we can see how even the most fully developed christological themes have maintained their earlier shape: the Father and Son motif is much developed in John, but the much briefer motif in the Synoptics is sufficient to explain where it came from; the pattern of 'Son of Man' sayings appearing only on Jesus' lips is maintained by John, even though the characteristic ascending-descending motif is new to him; and even the striking and distinctive 'I am' formula can be paralleled by or even traced back to its numinous use in Mk 6.50.

In the light of this the task at the end of that previous paper was to investigate further the actual tradition-history process which led from these earlier traditional elements to the much elaborated treatment of the fourth evangelist. Given that we have a reasonably clear appreciation of at least some of the main factors which helped determine the *final* shape of the tradition, and given too that we can recognize at least some of the points within that tradition from whose beginnings it grew to its present shape, what can we say about the process in between?¹ In terms of the issues confronting this Symposium can we say anything about the oral tradition of Jesus' ministry and about the traditioning process, whether oral or literary, which resulted in the Gospel of John?

2. The Beginning of the Johannine Tradition

Most of the details in the penultimate paragraph of Section 1 above were drawn from C.H. Dodd's masterly study, *Historical Tradition in*

1. It will be noted that my concern therefore is not with the issue of the historicity of the Johannine tradition, but with the issue of its earlier forms and the processes by which it reached its present Johannine 'shape'.

the Fourth Gospel.¹ This remains the basic starting point for any discussion of the earliest forms of the Johannine tradition, or of the historical roots from which it grew. It remains unsurpassed in its detail and in the balanced maturity of its judgment. What has followed has in effect, on this subject anyway, merely dotted a few 'i's and crossed a few 't's. Particularly to be mentioned here are the sequence of studies by B. Lindars,² and the various attempts to illuminate the stages of the tradition's development and their backgrounds.³ It will be sufficient for our purposes, therefore, to summarize Dodd's main findings, with a view to providing a starting point for our own analysis.

If we work with a distinction between *narratives* and *sayings*, the most important of the positive results of Dodd's analysis for the historical value of the Johannine tradition can be summarized simply and in the sequence of the Gospel itself (page references in brackets).

1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

2. B. Lindars, *Behind the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1971); also *John* (NCB; London: Oliphants, 1972), esp. pp. 46-54; also 'Traditions behind the Fourth Gospel', in *L'Évangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction, théologie* (BETL, 44; ed. M. de Jonge; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1975), pp. 107-24; 'John and the Synoptic Gospels: Test Case', *NTS* 27 (1980-81), pp. 287-94; also 'Discourse and Tradition: the Use of the Sayings of Jesus in the Discourses of the Fourth Gospel', *JSNT* 13 (1981), pp. 82-101. Note also J.A.T. Robinson, *The Priority of John* (London: SCM Press, 1985), particularly pp. 300-22.

3. R.E. Brown, *John* (AB, 29-30; New York: Doubleday, 1966, 1971), particularly pp. xxxiv-xxxix; also *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (London: Chapman, 1979); J.L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968; 2nd edn, 1979); *idem*, 'Glimpses into the History of the Johannine Community', in *The Gospel of John in Christian History* (New York: Paulist, 1978), ch. 3; D.M. Smith, 'Johannine Christianity' in *Johannine Christianity: Essays on its Setting, Sources and Theology* (University of South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), pp. 1-36; K. Wengst, *Bedrängte Gemeinde und verherrlichter Christus: Der historische Ort des Johannesevangeliums als Schlüssel zu seiner Interpretation* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981); U.C. von Wahlde, *The Johannine Commandments. I. John and the Struggle for the Johannine Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990).

*Narratives*¹

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|---|
| 1. | 19-21 | John the Baptist—dialogue with Jerusalem delegation (256-69, 262-65) (Bailey, 9-11) |
| | 23, 26-27 | John the Baptist—his preaching (251-56) |
| | 28 | John the Baptist—geographical details (249) |
| | 32-34 | John the Baptist—descent of dove, heavenly voice (253-56, 259-61) |
| | 35-44 | The first disciples—complement Synoptics (302-10) |
| 2. | 1-11 | Miracle of wine—parable nucleus (?) (223-38) |
| | 12 | Transitional passage—Capernaum (235-36) |
| | 13-16 | Cleansing of Temple—Synoptic parallel (156-62) |
| 3. | 22-23 | Transitional passage—geographical details (236, 249) |
| 4. | 1-3 | Transitional passage—geographical details (236-38) |
| | 43-45 | Transitional passage—geographical details (238-41) |
| | 46-49, 51 | Healing at Cana—Q parallel (188-95) |
| 5. | 1-9 | Healing at Bethzatha—geographical detail/Synoptic parallel (174-80) |
| 6. | 1-13 | Feeding of 5,000—Synoptic parallel (199-217) |
| | 16-21 | Walking on water—Synoptic parallel (196-99) |
| | 29 | Request for sign—Synoptic parallel (218-19) |
| | 22-25 | Transitional passage—geographical details, Synoptic parallel |
| | 69 | Peter's confession (219-20) |
| 7. | 1-2 | Transitional passage—geographical detail (241) |
| | 23-24 | Healing on Sabbath (332-33) |
| 8. | | |
| 9. | 1-7 | Healing at Siloam—Synoptic parallel in form (181-88) |
| 10. | | |
| 11. | 1-44 | Raising of Lazarus—some points of parallel (228-32) |
| | 54 | Transitional passage—geographical details |
| 12. | 1-8 | Anointing at Bethany—Synoptic parallel (162-73) (Bailey 1-8) |
| | 12-15 | Triumphal entry—OT quotations (152-56) (Bailey, 22-27) |

1. I append some references to J.A. Bailey, *The Traditions Common to the Gospels of Luke and John* (NovTSup, 7; Leiden: Brill, 1963), who concludes that the many parallels between John and Luke, mostly in the Passion narrative, are usually to be explained by John's dependence on Luke.

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--|
| | 13-20 | Passion narrative—use of testimonia (31-49) |
| 13. | 17-20 | Passion narrative—broad structure (21-30)
(Bailey 29-102) |
| 18. | 1 | Geographical detail |
| | 3-5, 10-12 | Arrest of Jesus (65-81) |
| | 13, 15-16, 18, 20 | Trial before Sanhedrin (88-96) |
| | 17, 25-27 | Peter's denial (83-88) |
| | 28a, 33, 37 | Trial before Pilate (96-120) |
| | 39-40 | Jesus or Barabbas (100-101) |
| 19. | 1-3 | The mocking of Jesus (101-103) |
| | 16-19, 24b, 25 | The crucifixion of Jesus (121-36) |
| | 29, 30b | The death of Jesus |
| | 38, 40-42 | The burial of Jesus (137-39) |
| 20. | 1-2 | The women at the tomb (140-42) |
| | 19-20 | Appearance of Jesus to the twelve (142-44) |

*Sayings*¹

1. 15, 29, 30, 36(?) (269-75)
26-27, 33 // Mk 1.8 pars. (253-56) (Bailey, 9-11)
40-42 // Mt. 16.17-18 (306-309)
51 // Mk 14.62 (JATR)
2. 10 // Lk. 5.39 (BL)
18 // Mt. 12.38-39 (330)
19 // Mk 14.58 par. (89-91)
3. 2 // Mk 12.14 (328-29)
3, 5 // Mt. 18.3 (358-59)
8 // Mk 4.27 (364-65) (DEA no. 148)
29 // Mk 2.19 (280-87) (DEA no. 149)
35 // Mt. 11.27 (JATR)
4. 31-34 (325-27)
35-38 // Mt. 9.37-38 par. (404-405) (DEA no. 150)
44 // Mk 6.4 par. (239)
5. 19-20a // Mt. 11.27 (386n.) (DEA no. 151)
23 // Mt. 10.40 par. (BL, 116-17)

1. For the sake of completeness I have added in other suggestions culled from DEA = D.E. Aune's listing of aphorisms in the present volume; BL = B. Lindars, 'Traditions'; RR = R. Riesner in the present volume; and JATR = J.A.T. Robinson, *Priority*.

- 30 // Lk. 22.42 (363-64)
6. 20 // Mk 6.50 par. (197)
 26 // Mk 8.11-12 pars. (BL)
 30 // Mt. 12.38-39 par. (330)
 33 // Mt. 6.11 (333-34)
 38 // Lk. 22.42 (363-64)
 51 (58-59)
 67-70 (219-21)
7. 4 // Mk 4.22 par. (322-25)
8. 31-35 // Mt. 3.8-9 par. (330-32) (DEA no. 152)
9. 2-5 (185-88)
 38-41 (327-28)
10. 1-5 // Mt. 18.12-13 (382-85)
 15 // Mt. 11.27 (359-61)
11. 9-10 (DEA no. 153)
12. 7-8 // Mk 14.6-8 par. (164-66)
 24 (DEA no. 154)
 25 // Mk 8.35 pars. (338-43)
 26 // Mt. 16.24 (352-53)
 27(-28) // Lk. 22.42-43 (69)
 47 // Lk. 9.56 v.1. (355)
13. 13-16 // Mt. 10.24-25 pars. (335-38)
 17 // Lk. 11.28; Mt. 24.46 par. (353-54)
 20 // Mt. 10.40 pars. (343-47)
 21 // Mk 14.18 par. (55)
 38 // Mk 14.30 par. (55)
14. 13-14 (349-52)
15. 18 // Mk 13.13; Lk. 6.22 (408)
 20 // Lk. 21.12 par. (409)
 21 // Mk 13.13 pars. (409)
16. 2 // Mt. 24.9 (409)
 21 (DEA no. 155)
 23-24 // Mt. 7.7 par.; 21.22 (349-52)
 33 // Mt. 24.9 (409)
17. 2 // Mt. 28.18 (361-63)
 11, 15 // Mt. 11.9, 13 (333-34)
 25 // Mt. 11.27 (JATR)
18. 20 // (Mk 4.21-25) (RR, p. 189)
- 19.

20. 23 // Mt. 18.18 (347-49)
 29 // Mt. 13.16 par. (354-55)

Dodd also notes that the discourses contain a number of parables not dissimilar to the more characteristic Synoptic form (3.29; 5.19-20a; 8.35; 10.1-5; 11.9-10; 12.24; 16.21)¹ and three sequences of sayings again closer to the Synoptic pattern (4.31-38; 12.20-26; 13.1-20).² In addition, we could note the clustering of earlier sayings material, particularly in 12.25-28, 13.13-17, 20-21, and 15.18-21. And I have already observed in my previous study that several passages could be ascribed to 'the beloved disciple' as the source and validator of these traditions and therefore to that extent at least probably a historical individual (19.35; 20.2-9; cf. 21.24).³

Given the overall striking and sustained contrast between the portrayals of Jesus in the Synoptics on the one hand and in John on the other, these are impressive findings. Even if the argument cannot be sustained (for direct dependence on early historical tradition) in a proportion of the examples cited,⁴ nevertheless the overlap with and echo of Synoptic tradition at point after point must indicate a dependence on early tradition and a *lack* of reworking so that the parallel is still clearly visible. More to the point is Dodd's finding again and again that the overlap or parallel cannot be satisfactorily explained by Johannine dependence on one or other of the Gospels,⁵ and is better explained by John's knowledge of Synoptic-like tradition but not of the Synoptic version of it.⁶

1. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, pp. 366-87; see also Lindars, 'Traditions', p. 33. Robinson (*Priority*, pp. 319-20) notes 13 or 14 Johannine parables.

2. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, pp. 388-405.

3. Dunn, 'John', p. 315.

4. Examples which could be cited include the distinctive Baptist testimony to Christ (1.15, 29, 30, 36), the wine miracle (2.1-11), the opening of ch. 7 and the raising of Lazarus (11).

5. The view however is still maintained quite strongly that John knew at least Mark: see, e.g., those cited and discussed by Smith in *Johannine Christianity*, chs. 6 and 7.

6. The significance of the Johannine elements in *Papyrus Egerton 2* is unclear; they reflect both Johannine narratives and sayings and suggest a knowledge of the Johannine (and Synoptic) traditions, though not necessarily of the written text: see the evaluation by J. Jeremias in E. Hennecke, W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (eds.), *New Testament Apocrypha*, I (London: Lutterworth, 1963), pp. 94-97.

We are now in a position to go further into the question of John and the oral Gospel tradition. In the light of our (albeit provisional) grasp now of both the end and the beginnings of the Johannine tradition, of both the final form and its roots in earlier tradition, we can go on to ask what this tells us about the *oral* forms of the Gospel tradition and about the process of development from such beginnings to the end John devised. Two points call for particular attention: (1) the degree to which the earliest forms of the historical tradition within John and their Synoptic parallels had already diverged; (2) the degree of freedom-within-limits which the Johannine development displays in relation to these earlier traditions. We will continue to use the simple distinction for purposes of analysis between narratives and sayings.

3. *The (Oral ?) Diversity of the Earliest Traditions of Jesus: The Narratives*

What we have in mind here is a diversity in tradition which cannot be attributed solely to the evangelists' reworking and which must go back to much earlier stages in the traditioning process. So far as narratives are concerned, the most interesting examples are: (a) the healing at Cana (4.46-54), (b) the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water (6.1-21), and (c) the anointing at Bethany and the triumphal entry (12.1-8, 12-19).

a. *The Healing at Cana (4.46-54)*

Since the time of Irenaeus,¹ the suggestion has been held as highly plausible that this is a variant version of the story of the centurion's servant/boy in Mt. 8.5-13 // Lk. 7.1-10. Although at first sight the two (the Synoptics' and John's) seem quite distinct, on closer examination the strength of the case becomes increasingly persuasive. Note the following points of contact: (1) a person of rank (Matthew/Luke, centurion; John, βασιλικός); (2) having heard of Jesus (Lk. 7.3a // Jn 4.47a); (3) 'asked Jesus to come and heal' (Lk. 7.3b // Jn 4.47b); (4) his boy or close personal servant (all three call him παῖς, but Luke also describes him as δοῦλος, and John as υἱός and παιδίον); (5) who was ill, close to death (Lk. 7.2b ἤμελλεν τελευτᾶν; Jn 4.47c ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν); (6) in Capernaum; (7) Matthew and John

1. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 2.22.3 (PG 7.783).

indicate some hesitancy on Jesus' part (Mt. 8.7;¹ Jn 4.48); (8) all three emphasize the word of healing (Mt. 8.8, 13 // Lk. 7.7; Jn 4.50); (9) that the healing took place at a distance; (10) Matthew and John note that the healing happened 'at that hour' (ἐκεῖνη τῇ ὥρᾳ, Mt. 8.13 // Jn 4.53); (11) not least of importance is the fact that in all three, but particularly Matthew and John, the principal thematic focus is on the faith of the centurion/official.

These amount to a very impressive list, which, taken together are probably too many to be explained as coincidence, either of similar events, or of similarly told stories. The stronger probability is that the two accounts constitute variants of a single original. And since the coincidences are more of substance than of vocabulary, we may deduce that the single original was in oral rather than written form (or indeed a common event witnessed and retold by one or more, present on the occasion and able to ratify the effect of Jesus' word subsequently).²

In addition we can fairly easily detach the distinctive Johannine emphases introduced in the Johannine reworking/retelling of the story.

1. 4.47—the connecting link with the previous material in John. Instead of Luke's 'having heard concerning Jesus', John reads, 'having heard that Jesus had come from Judaea into Galilee'. Otherwise the introduction is closely parallel in detail to the Lukan version.
2. The contrast between inadequate faith (4.48) and a faith rooted in word and confirmed by sign (4.50, 54; cf. e.g. 2.23-25).
3. The emphasis on the life-giving word of Jesus: most of the otherwise surprisingly extensive conclusion seems designed chiefly to provide occasion for the threefold repetition of the point, 'Your son lives' (4.50, 51, 53). Similar redaction analysis can, of course, be applied to the other two versions of the story. Out of the common core of the story (Mt. 8.7-10, 13 // Lk. 7.6-10), Luke has chosen to pick out and emphasize the theme of humility, the centurion's unworthiness/worthi-

1. Jesus' reply in Matthew should probably be punctuated as a question—'Am I to come and heal him?'

2. See also the discussion in R. Schnackenburg, *John*, I (HTCNT; London: Burns & Oates, 1968), pp. 471-75; Brown, *John*, pp. 192-93.

ness (Lk. 7.4, 6-7)—hence the more elaborate introduction (7.1-5) and the addition of v. 7a. Out of the same core, Matthew has highlighted the theme of faith (Mt. 8.10, 13), with vv. 11-12 sandwiched between the two references, so that the centurion can be seen as a paradigm for Gentile faith.

What is interesting for us here is that the common core diverges as much as it does.¹ Two points are particularly notable.

1. The chief figure of the story (apart from Jesus) is identified differently. In the Synoptics he is a centurion; whether or not this means that he was a Gentile, both Synoptic versions assume this to have been the case and make it the basis of the different elaborations of and lessons they draw from the story.² In John he is a member of Herod's court, and probably a Jew, although John makes no effort to exploit the fact. Here we may deduce that in one stream of story-telling the implication that the suppliant was a Gentile was deemed important; but in another the exact nature of the person's rank was not thought a matter of importance to be preserved in future retellings. Had we only the Synoptic version we could make a fairly confident historical judgment that the original suppliant thus remembered was a Gentile centurion, surprising (or dubious) though that might be in terms of the historical probability of a Roman centurion being stationed at this time in Capernaum. But when John's version is added to the evidence, we have to conclude either that the earliest version(s) recalled only a person of rank (in Herod's service?), whom each version (Synoptics' and John's) particularized as was deemed appropriate; or that an/(the) earlier more specific reminiscence of the suppliant's status became vaguer in a retelling where the suppliant's status was not integral to the storyteller's³ thrust. The uncertainty on

1. Cf. E. Haenchen, *Johannesevangelium* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1980): 'Das Verhältnis dieser Perikope zur Erzählung Mt 8 5-13/Lk. 7.1-10 lehrt, wie stark sich eine Geschichte nicht nur durch die Redaktionsarbeit eines Evangelisten, sondern auch in der mündlichen Überlieferung wandeln kann' (pp. 260-61)—summarizing his treatment in 'Johanneische Probleme', *Gott und Mensch* (1965), pp. 82-90.

2. Since Herod's army was modelled on the Roman pattern, the 'centurion' of the Synoptic account could have been a Jew.

3. It should be noted that I do not use 'story-teller' as a technical folklore term, but simply as a way of referring to those who took it upon themselves or were appointed within the earliest Christian congregations to recall and retell such episodes

this point means that we can have no certainty today as to the original suppliant's status.

2. In Matthew and Luke the common tradition focuses on the dialogue between Jesus and the centurion, and emphasizes the centurion's faith, though containing another emphasis which Luke was able to exploit and develop. In John we do not have that crucial snatch of dialogue, but we do have an equivalent snatch of dialogue which also focuses on the faith of the suppliant, and which also provides occasion for him to express his faith, but which otherwise serves as an occasion for a characteristic Johannine theme. Moreover, Matthew has exploited his version of the suppliant's faith by emphasizing that it preceded and drew forth Jesus' word of healing. In contrast, the faith of the royal retainer in John has to be cajoled and evidently does not become fully effective until he has seen the result of Jesus' life-giving word (4.53). Here again, had we the Synoptics alone, we could be confident that the almost verbatim agreement between Matthew and Luke regarding the dialogue between Jesus and the centurion puts us in touch with a first-hand memory of such an exchange in Jesus' ministry. With John's evidence added in, however, the memory appears to have become vaguer (an exchange which served to highlight the suppliant's faith), or at least to have become even more adaptable than in Matthew and Luke, so as to serve the more characteristic Johannine emphasis the more effectively. That is to say, John attests to the flexibility or vagueness of a traditioning process which we might otherwise have regarded as more stable and fixed at least in such core elements.

Such diversity may well indicate an oral traditioning process, since marks of possible literary interdependence are so slight.¹ There was a story about Jesus healing the boy of a person of rank, in Capernaum, at a distance, which brought out the suppliant's faith. We need not doubt that it was a story which recalled an event of Jesus' ministry in faithful detail at least to the extent just outlined. But in the retelling of the story, different versions developed and diverged. Matthew and Luke knew one version, where the dialogue between Jesus and the

from the ministry of Jesus within the gatherings, formal or otherwise, of the first congregations.

1. This is not to imply, of course, that use of a literary source cannot be very free.

suppliant allowed them to develop further divergent versions. John's tradition picked up another version, which allowed a different identification of the suppliant and a different emphasis on the suppliant's faith. Whether that implies a story recalled after many years, or one worn smoother by much retelling, we cannot say.¹ The point is the degree of divergence *already* evident behind the *earliest* forms we can identify.

b. *The Feeding of the Five Thousand and the Walking on the Water* (6.1-21)

There is no question that these are the same traditions in each of the Gospels—all four for the former, with Luke alone omitting the latter. Given that the *same* event/tradition is here retold in each case, the striking thing once again is the divergence of the traditions.

In the case of the feeding miracle, there are verbal echoes and parallels in almost every line in the version shared by the Synoptics. As for John, with one exception, the verbal parallels are remarkable by their scarcity, amounting to little more than the barest outline of detail without which there would be no story in the first place—'crowd followed' (v. 2), seeing a 'great crowd' (v. 5), 'buy loaves', 'eat' (v. 5), 'grass', 'sat' (v. 10), and 'took the loaves...', 'gave' (v. 11).² The interesting exception is that in every case where a *number* is given, there is precise agreement between all four Gospels—2,000 denarii (v. 7), 5 loaves and 2 fish (v. 9), 5000 men (v. 10), 12 baskets of fragments (v. 13). Such agreement confirms that all four versions go back to a single original (whether story or event).³ But it

1. The discussion here is not affected by the issue as to whether the version of the story used by John came to him in a 'Signs Source' (see particularly R. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* [SNTSMS, 11; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970], pp. 38-48), since we are concerned with the common tradition which lay behind the material which John used. If, however, John is reacting to the form and emphasis of the story in his source (as at 4.48), then we would have to speak of a further version of the story, though one once again focusing on the suppliant's faith.

2. Cf. the fuller discussion in Brown, *John*, pp. 236-44; Lindars, *John*, pp. 237-38.

3. The case for recognizing behind the feeding miracle a historical event is strengthened by the uncontrived way in which Jn 6.15 and Mark's surprising use of 'compelled' (Mk 6.45) fit together, each giving separate halves of the climax to the

would appear that, as between the versions of the Synoptics and John at least, there was no strong desire felt to preserve a standard version of the story. The fixed points seem to have been the numbers; the other details of agreement are mostly contingent on them and would almost inevitably be involved in the unfolding of a story round these details. But this is precisely what we would expect in oral tradition—fixed points of detail which the Christian retelling the story would elaborate in his own words, so that while language and other detail might diverge, and diverge quite markedly (e.g. 6.2b-4, 8-9a), the substance of the story remained constant.¹

With the walking on the water we see something the same. In John's version, the briefest of the three versions, the points of contact at first again seem to be only those without which the story could not have been told: 'his disciples...embarking into a boat' to go 'across' the lake (6.16), a 'wind' (6.18). But then come a couple of close verbal parallels: they see him 'walking on the lake', but he says to them, 'It is I (ἐγώ εἰμι). Do not fear (μὴ φοβεῖσθε)' (6.19-20). Finally John ends the story abruptly with only the phrase 'into the boat', but differently used, in common (6.21). Here again we can see what may well be the effect of oral story-telling: a constant common core, on which the whole story depends, and from which it can be derived, or by means of which it could be retained; and different elaborations to make different points. In Mark's case a quasi-ghost story (Mk 6.48-50) and an occasion to emphasize the disciples' hardness of heart (6.52). In Matthew's an opportunity to insert an episode about Peter, as the example of little-faith discipleship (Mt. 14.28-31), and to round

occasion which together make a strikingly coherent whole: the crowd, enthused by what had happened (whatever it was!), seeking to force a role of military leadership on Jesus; the disciples caught up in the enthusiasm, with Jesus having forcibly to despatch them on to the lake late in the evening, before he could (only then) dismiss the too excited crowd, and retreat into the hills to pray (in the face of some temptation?).

1. The fact that there is a further Synoptic version of the feeding miracle (the feeding of the 4,000, Mk 8.1-10 // Mt. 15.32-39), and with a similar but different scatter of overlapping details, but also different numbers, indicates still further diversity in the retelling of this episode, where the fixed point was simply the fact of a feeding miracle itself. There may, of course, be a theological significance in the number of baskets in each of the two feeding miracles: in the first, 12 baskets representing the 12 tribes of Israel; in the second, 7 baskets representing the nations.

off the story on a note of worship and confession (14.33). In this case John seems to have made little effort to build onto the earlier material: the mention of darkness (Jn 6.17) to echo his strong light/darkness motif; and probably the ἐγώ εἰμι saying because it fitted into and may indeed be the traditional root or inspiration for his whole 'I am' christological emphasis. At the same time, he makes no attempt to build a discourse or dialogue out of this miracle, as was his usual practice. The discourse which follows, of course, leapfrogs the walking on the water episode back to the feeding miracle. What we can say, however, is that John's decision to retain the walking on the water episode in conjunction with the feeding miracle must assuredly indicate that these episodes were linked from the beginning.¹ So firmly linked, in fact, that even John, with all his freedom in using miracle traditions to express his 'signs' theology, and even though he has no dialogue or discourse to draw out from this episode, found it desirable or necessary to keep the two together. Here, we may say, was another fairly constant element in the tradition, oral and written—the conjunction of these two miracle stories—somewhat similar to the integration in the Synoptics of the raising of Jairus's daughter and the healing of the woman with internal bleeding (Mk 5.21-43 par.).

c. The Anointing at Bethany and the Entry into Jerusalem
(12.1-8, 12-19)

The anointing at Bethany is one of the strongest pieces of evidence for those who think John knew and used Mark.² (1) Both set the episode in a house in Bethany (Mk 14.3 // Jn 12.1). (2) Both use the phrase μύρου νάρδου πιστικῆς πολυτίμου, 'costly ointment of pure nard' (Mk 14.3 // Jn 12.3). (3) In both the complaint is made in more or less the same words: 'this ointment (could) have been sold for 3,000 denarii and given to the poor' (Mk 14.5 // Jn 12.5). (4) Jesus' response is again very close, though the sequence of clauses differs: 'Jesus said, "Let her be...for my burial...for the poor you have always with you, but me you do not always have"' (Mk 14.6, 7, 8 // Jn 12.7-8).

At one notable point, however, the Johannine version diverges

1. So most commentators.

2. So particularly C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John* (London: SPCK, 2nd edn, 1978), p. 409; F. Neirynck, *Jean et les Synoptiques: Examen critique de l'exégèse de M.-E. Boismard* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979).

completely from Mark and closely parallels the different story of Lk. 7.36-50, at the point where a woman anoints Jesus' feet (in Mark it is Jesus' head which is anointed) and wipes his feet with her hair (Lk. 7.38 // Jn 12.3). Further divergences between John and Mark are to be seen in the identification of the householder (Simon the leper, Mark/Matthew; Pharisee, Luke; Lazarus, John); in the identification of the woman (unnamed, Matthew/Mark; a sinner, Luke; Mary, sister of Lazarus, John); and in the identification of the complainant (the disciples, Matthew; 'some', Mark; Simon the Pharisee, Luke; Judas Iscariot, with the added note about him being the group's treasurer and a thief, John).

The proper deduction to be drawn, I would suggest, is not that John knew and used Mark—for John's divergence from Mark at all these places then becomes a puzzle¹—but rather that we see a further likely example of an oral transmission of tradition, together with the strengths and weaknesses of that process. Its strengths once again are the degree to which it could retain as fixed elements a substantial amount of detail on which the effectiveness of the story hung, and round which a particular retelling could be artistically contrived. In this case the fixed elements as between two versions of the story were substantial, but still only the skeleton of the story—place of happening, the richness of the ointment, the complaint reinforcing the uncalculating generosity of the act, and the climactic saying suggesting a pronouncement story formulated early on.² What was not so fixed in the telling was whether it was Jesus' head or feet which were anointed, and who it was who did the anointing (in the Near East of the time it was remarkable enough that Jesus should have accepted such an act of devotion from a *woman*, whoever she was). The conflation at this point of a detail from what was probably a different event (Luke)³ with the outline common to Mark and John is the sort of thing which can be readily envisaged as happening in oral retelling; a confusion at the literary level is much harder to explain. The other divergent

1. So, e.g., Lindars, *John*, pp. 412-14, who also notes that 'in all the cases of verbal agreement we must seriously reckon with the possibility of assimilation *after* the gospels were written, in the process of transcription'.

2. In Mark's version the rather compressed ending attested by John has been filled out to an unusually lengthy concluding exhortation by Jesus (Mk 14.6-9).

3. So, e.g., those cited by G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC, 36; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), p. 206.

details are likewise best explained as evidence of oral retelling: where the fixed core had not specified particular characters in the story, the implication is that there was some liberty to make plausible identifications as best fitted the occasion or the themes of a more connected teaching/story-telling. The tradition bearer/reteller within the community had evidently not been charged to retain such stories as though they were already sacred text, to be passed on by word-for-word memorization, but rather he or she served both the demands of the tradition (a living tradition), and the needs of the community (for a word which spoke to the situation), by embroidering these fixed elements of the tradition as occasion invited or dictated.¹

Similar points can be drawn out with regard to the triumphal entry, and we need not labour the case.² The only detail which John shares with the other Gospels is the cry which greeted Jesus, using Ps. 118.26 — 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord'.³ In addition, both Matthew and John explicitly cite Zech. 9.9 (adapted). But otherwise the details diverge quite markedly.⁴ In the Synoptics, the disciples are in primary focus in setting up the entry. In John, by way of contrast it is the crowds who take the initiative in the shout of praise; Jesus then finds a young donkey himself; and the disciples only appear in a reflective role towards the end, where the distinctive notes of Johannine themes are clear (disciples' misunderstanding clarified by Jesus' 'glorification', the crowd 'bearing witness', 'sign', Lazarus, 'the world'). Here again we have evidence of a memory of an event in Jesus' mission which was maintained in the tradition by the combination of common theme (entry into Jerusalem on a donkey at a festival) and single fixed element (the shout of praise using the words from Ps. 118.26). But whereas the Synoptics indicate a sequence of literary contacts, and the second half of John's account (12.16-19) indicates an attempt to nest the story within the literary motifs of the Gospel, the

1. Cf. again Haenchen, *Johannesevangelium*, pp. 434-35.

2. Fuller discussion may be found in Brown, *John*, pp. 459-61.

3. 'Hosanna' is not part of Ps. 118.26. But since it is the only place where it occurs in the NT, and is common to the accounts of John as well as Matthew and Mark, the implication is that its place was fixed in the tradition precisely in its conjunction with Ps. 118.26; it is, of course, repeated in the Mark and Matthew version (Mt. 21.9 // Mk 11.10).

4. 'They differ in every point where it is possible to differ in relating the same incident' (Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, p. 155).

other differences between John and the Synoptics are probably better explained in terms of an oral story-telling which allowed just the sort of diverse elaboration that we find as between the Synoptics and John.

The picture, then, is fairly clear. In John's Gospel we can cite four or five narratives which are probably best explained in terms of an oral traditioning process. They are episodes which are evidently the same episodes, but so different in detail that a literary interdependence cannot be demonstrated (though, of course, it also cannot be entirely ruled out). The marks of such a traditioning process are a substantial similarity in content and theme, with the story in each case built round certain fixed points—faith in Jesus' word for healing at a distance, the numbers involved, the central encounter, snatches of dialogue, the cry of greeting. In the latter case we could probably say that these are the universal marks of the retold story—substantial continuity of theme and fixed points on which the story and its effects depend, allowing a variety of detail and application as may be deemed appropriate.¹ At all events, the Johannine tradition in the cases examined certainly seems to fit that pattern.

4. The (Oral?) Diversity of the Earliest Traditions of Jesus: The Sayings

So far as the sayings tradition is concerned, the character of the traditioning process is less easy to establish than in the case of the narrative tradition, since in most cases it is an isolated saying which forms the principal evidence.² Moreover, the more that parallel sayings diverge, the less easy is it to be confident that they stem from the same original, without the supporting detail which a fuller narrative provides. Nonetheless a number of sayings listed in the table above invite closer examination. I have made no attempt to include all those listed in the

1. Cf. A.B. Lord, 'The Gospels as Oral Traditional Literature', in W.O. Walker, *The Relationships among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1978), pp. 37-38.

2. The groups of sayings noted by Dodd (see p. 356 above) do not change the basic problem of comparing the Johannine and Synoptic versions, except that they confirm that some of the individual sayings were conveyed in clusters, formed in terms of similarity of theme or as an aid to memory.

table which could have been considered; the choice is illustrative rather than exhaustive.¹

a. 1.27: 'he who comes after me'; 'I am not worthy to loose the thongs of his sandal'. The first phrase is verbally identical in Matthew and John. The second clause has just the variations, as between a united Synoptic witness and John, which we would expect in two different translations or Greek versions of a common Aramaic original: different synonyms for 'worthy', different constructions for the subordinate clause, singular/plural sandal(s).

b. 1.26, 33: 'I baptize in water... the one who baptizes in Holy Spirit'. The variations as between the Synoptics and John in the first clause could be editorial or could indicate oral diversity (substance constant, wording diverse). The two parts are separated, as in Matthew and Luke. In the second clause John or his tradition has the abbreviated form, as in Mark ('and fire' missing), adapted to the flow of the Baptist's speech at this point.

c. 2.18 and 6.30. The tradition recalls a request to Jesus for a sign—doubled in Matthew as well (Mt. 12.38; 16.1). Most interesting here is the variety of settings in which the request is recalled. Mark locates his single reference immediately after the feeding of the *four* thousand (Mk 8.11; as also Mt. 16.1), which parallels Jn 6.30 and suggests a memory of such a demand being put to Jesus in the wake of the incident on which the traditions of the feeding miracle(s) are based. Matthew locates his first reference, like the somewhat parallel Lk. 11.29, shortly after the collection of exorcism sayings (Mt. 12.25-32 // Lk. 11.15-26), suggesting another fairly firm setting preserved in the early Church's use of the Jesus tradition. Jn 2.18's setting within the cleansing of the temple has no parallel, except to the extent that all three Synoptics report that Jesus was asked for proof of his authority shortly after the temple incident (Mk 11.27-28 pars.), suggesting that such a juxtaposition was fairly well established within the Passion narrative. Otherwise we would have to speak of freedom of editorial usage, betokening the teacher's sense of freedom to incorporate such memories of Jesus' ministry at appropriate points in his teaching,

1. For example, discussion of 5.19-20a's relation with Mt. 11.27 par. would have to be more extensive than is possible in this paper; see further my *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 27-34.

appropriate not least in terms of his own teaching concerns and objectives.

d. 2.19 is particularly interesting, as compared with Mk 14.58.

John	λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον, καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν.
Mark	ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον . . . καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον . . . οἰκοδομήσω.

The wording is so close that it must be judged highly likely that the two forms stem from a common original. What is striking is that whereas Mark attributes the saying to *false* testimony against Jesus, John has it on Jesus' own lips. We need not pursue the fascinating questions as to how far one or other or both have diverged or been adapted from the original. All that is necessary to be noted here is that Jesus must have been remembered or reported as having said something of the sort, and that whereas Mark has been concerned to deny that Jesus said his version, John has been prepared to affirm and interpret appropriately what he heard as attributed to Jesus. The complications in this and the diverse reasoning of Mark and John surely reflect the pressures operating upon tradition, oral and written, in the public forum and the problems confronting the Christian teachers in the weight they gave to such tradition and the way they used it.

e. 3.3, 5 is certainly plausible as a variant of Mt. 18.3, particularly as it is the *only* passage in John which echoes the normal kingdom language of the Synoptics.

John	ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν . . οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν . .
Matthew	ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ . . . γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδιά, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν . .

Such a radicalizing of the saying (from 'become a child', to 'be born again'), which simply serves to reinforce and not at all to alter the point of the saying, may be regarded as a legitimate (responsible and effective) teaching device.

f. 3.29 looks like an adaptation of the mini-parable of Jesus in which he likened himself to a bridegroom, or the mood of his ministry to that of a wedding feast, and drew corollaries from this for his

disciples (Mk 2.19 pars.). The adaptation makes the same identification (bridegroom), applies it to those with the bridegroom, and makes an equivalent deduction (they should celebrate/rejoice). It should be noted, however, that in John the words appear on the lips of the Baptist.¹ Here again we may see the flexibility of the traditioning process—the use and application of a particular image stemming from and associated with Jesus, but freely adapted to different contexts while making the same point.

g. 4.35-38. The use of harvest as an encouragement to mission in 4.35-38. is probably drawn from 'the same reservoir of tradition' (Dodd) as Mt. 9.37-38 par. All the more interesting, therefore, is the fact that Matthew uses it to introduce a mission charge which deliberately excludes a Samaritan mission (Mt. 10.5), whereas in John the same imagery is sandwiched between the two halves of the description of the woman's testimony to her fellow Samaritans and introduces the report of its success (Jn 4.39). This somewhat remarkable contrast shows how the same tradition, or the same remembered imagery as coined by Jesus, could be turned to different account in different teaching and ecclesiastical contexts.

h. 4.44, 'Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honour in his own country', clearly echoes the saying reported in direct speech in the Synoptics (Mk 6.4 pars.). They, however, all retain it within the rejection at Nazareth episode. John, though retaining it within a Galilaean setting, evidently felt no stronger compulsion from the tradition to locate it or attach it more firmly, and used it only in a traditional sequence.

i. Apart from 6.30 already mentioned, the middle chapters of John are not strong in close parallels. But 12.25, 'He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life', looks to be a close variant of Mk 8.35 pars., with further variations in Mt. 10.39 // Lk. 17.33—indicating, probably, a theme of Jesus' teaching remembered and transmitted in slightly varying forms, and adaptable to being used in different catechetical combinations.

j. 13.20, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me', is certainly a variation of a saying which likewise appears in various forms: Mk 9.37 pars., and Mt. 10.40, not to mention

1. Lindars, *John*, pp. 168, 283, cites 1.34; 2.10; and 7.4 as parallels.

Lk. 10.16 and Jn 5.23. Whereas Matthew and Luke use it very naturally in a mission context (Mt. 10.40 and Lk. 10.16), Jn 13.20 is closer to the setting of Mk 9.37 pars.—a rebuke to the disciples regarding ambition and a false evaluation of greatness. Only John sets it in the context of the Last Supper, but it was a theme which lent itself to the context of the meal table and menial service (as Mark's resumption of the theme in Mk 10.42-45 indicates). Consequently it is not hard to envisage a teaching theme within the table fellowship of the earliest communities in which such words of Jesus were recalled in a whole sequence of variations according to how the teacher used and reformulated the tradition.

k. 13.21, 38. The verbal closeness of 13.21 with its Synoptic counterpart—ἀμὴν (ἀμήν) λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰς ἐξ ὑμῶν παραδώσει με (Mt. 26.21 // Mk 14.18 // Jn 13.21)—indicates clearly a motif or remembered utterance of Jesus so deeply rooted in the tradition and so fixed by repeated recollection that the words had become invariable. This is all the more striking when so much of the Passion narrative attests a remembering more concerned with substance than detail. The same is almost as true for the memory of Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial in 13.38 (Mt. 26.34 // Mk 14.30 // Lk. 22.34 // Jn 13.38). It is probably significant that it is just these two predictions which are so fixed when most of the other details vary, and may very well suggest that the notes of betrayal and denial were fixed points within the early retelling of the Passion, a retelling which followed a similar broad outline and sequence of events, but which otherwise left it to the individual narrator to put the account into his or her own words. At this point, of course, we should recall the similarly fixed points in the narratives reviewed in section 3 above, particularly Jn 6.20 // Mk 6.50 par. and Jn 12.7-8 // Mk 14.6-8 par.

m. 20.23. Finally we should note that 20.23 (authority to declare sins forgiven) quite closely parallels in substance Mt. 18.18 (power to bind and loose). In both cases a post-resurrection setting is implied (Matthew's context presupposing an established Church structure). But whereas Matthew treats it as an in-house ruling to regulate relationships within the community, John gives it a missionary thrust (Jn 20.21-23).

To sum up, in all these cases we can speak of utterances of Jesus (and others) recollected as such, but used and re-used in a wide variety of ways—in a form attributed to Jesus or denied to him (d), in

terms unique within John (e), remembered as a word of the Baptist (f), in different and contradictory contexts (g), as an example of repeated themes or emphases in Jesus' teaching (j), as fixed points in larger stories (k), and so on. Such diversity reflects teaching situations in the earliest churches, where memories of what Jesus said were preserved often with fixed verbal details, but often also as a substance which could be adapted to different contexts; at any rate not as completely set in form and details, far less as tightly controlled by a group of formally recognized teachers/apostles, and passed on by word for word memorization.

5. *The Johannine Development of Earlier Tradition*

Having looked at the beginnings and earliest forms of the tradition which the fourth evangelist used, it remains for us to remind ourselves of how extensive his reworking and elaboration of the tradition could be.

a. John the Baptist. We have no reason to doubt that John has drawn on good tradition as the basis of his portrayal of the Baptist (see the table above and sections 4a, b, f). What needs to be noted now is the point made by W. Wink:¹ that John has done a thorough-going editorial job in reworking the traditions regarding the Baptist. First, by eliminating all the other emphases in the Baptist tradition—particularly his message of repentance (Mark) in the face of coming wrath (Q)—and focusing everything on his role as *witness* to Jesus as the Christ. Secondly, by greatly expanding and elaborating the Baptist's role as witness (1.6-7, 15, 19-36; 3.25ff.; 5.31-36; 10.41). In so doing he integrates the portrayal of the Baptist with his high Christology, probably in part as a polemic against a group of Baptist disciples (hence particularly 1.8-9, 20; 3.28-31), and has the Baptist speaking in characteristically Johannine language (1.15, 30, 34; 3.27, 31). This too is an example of how extensively a theme might be elaborated in the course of transmission and use. This is not an arbitrary process it should be noted: the Baptist's role as a witness to Jesus was part of the earlier tradition and that provides a strong degree of control—as do the still fixed points already noted. Nevertheless, the fourth evangelist

1. W. Wink, *John the Baptist in the Gospel Tradition* (SNTSMS, 7; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 87-106.

presumably shows us how extensive could be the manipulation of such core-tradition in the retelling of specific occasions.

b. The healing miracles of chs. 5 and 9, unlike the healing of ch. 4 and the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water in ch. 6, are not closely paralleled by any specific healing miracles in the Synoptics. Nevertheless, they have typical force—ch. 5 as the healing of a paralysed man on the Sabbath, and ch. 9 as the healing of a blind man also on the Sabbath (9.14, 16). As such they echo a number of stories of such healings of which there must have been several recalled regarding or attributed to Jesus during his ministry. To that extent we can speak of stories rooted in the memory of Jesus' ministry.¹ But once again John's use of them shows tremendous creativity. For John, the miracle of ch. 5 is a further example of Jesus' life-giving ministry (4.46–5.47),² which is finely integrated into a theological exposition of the Son's continuity with the Father. In providing the occasion for that discourse, John has quickly shifted the focus of the dispute arising from the episode away from the issue of Sabbath law to that of Christology. The same is even more true of the miracle in John 9, where the fact that it took place on the Sabbath has become almost incidental and soon forgotten. In addition, the exposition of J.L. Martyn is widely accepted today, that in these two chapters especially we see the fourth evangelist operating on two levels—telling a story which functions both on the historical level (Jesus' ministry) and on the contemporary (John's time), the blind man in particular being an example of the adherent to or beneficiary of the Johannine community who is now faced with the choice between synagogue or church, a both-and solution no longer being possible (9.22).³ This too was evidently regarded as an acceptable way of retelling a story about Jesus.

c. The wine miracle at Cana and the raising of Lazarus. Dodd includes these in his review, but recognizes the difficulties in so doing.⁴ In the former case, since the Johannine motifs are pervasive, Dodd concludes that the pre-canonical form may have to be seen as a Christian symbolical adaptation of a non-Christian tale, though possibly

1. So also Brown, *John*, p. 379.

2. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), pp. 318–322.

3. Martyn, *History*.

4. Dodd, *Historical Tradition*, pp. 223–32.

of a parable (of Jesus) of a wedding feast. In the latter case, the best points of contact Dodd can offer are the two raisings of the dead in Luke and Matthew, the widow of Nain's son (Lk. 7.11-17) and Jairus's daughter (Mt. 9.18-26), and the otherwise surprising outburst of emotion on the part of Jesus in Jn 11.33 (cf. Mk 1.43; Mt. 9.30). Apart from these details, once again the Johannine motifs overwhelm the parallels, and the pivotal position of the episode, as providing the trigger for Jesus' arrest (thus supplanting the temple incident in the Synoptics) makes its omission (if historical) by the other evangelists almost incredible.¹ What are we to make of this?—two episodes whose symbolic power in the Fourth Gospel surpasses that of most of the other miracles, and yet whose historical rootage in historical tradition is so slight. There would appear to be a danger here of Johannine elaboration becoming detached from its historical roots and of uncomfortable precedents being set. Perhaps the acceptability of these stories within the Johannine account depended on the fact that they were part of a whole whose overall grounding in historical tradition was much sounder than in the case of these two passages themselves. In contrast, then, to most of the examples documented in sections 3 and 4 above, it would probably be wisest to limit further re-use of them to their serviceability in illustrating Johannine themes.

d. Elaborations of sayings of Jesus. In the list of sayings above, we noted parallels to Jn 3.3, 5; 5.19-20a; 10.1-5; and 13.13-16. This suggests the further probability that these elements of common tradition have provided the basis on which the passages, within whose context these sayings are now found, were developed, the core round which these larger treatments were woven. In ch. 3 the radicalizing form of the earlier tradition (section 4e) probably provided the source for the new birth dialogue of 3.1-10. In its radicalized form (new birth, not just reversion to childhood), it could also serve as a focal point of the much larger 'life' motif announced in the prologue (1.4, 12-13) and so prominent in chs. 4-6. So too the father-son imagery of 5.19-20a strongly evokes the powerful Father-Son imagery of

1. Brown, *John*, pp. 428-30, suggests a basic story of a raising of Lazarus of Bethany which may stem from early tradition, but whose positioning and elaboration are the work of the evangelist. B. Lindars ('Rebuking the Spirit: A New Analysis of the Lazarus Story of John 11', forthcoming in *NTS*) conjectures that John's story retains traces of a tradition of an exorcism by Jesus (cf. particularly Jn 11.38, 41-44 with Mk 14.25-29).

Mt. 11.27 par. and the more widely rooted tradition of Jesus' dependence in prayer on God as *abba*,¹ and may be seen as the basis for the fuller exposition of the theme in 5.19-30 in classic Johannine fashion. In a similar way it is plausible to argue that the parable of 10.1-5 is itself an adaptation of the parable of the good shepherd (Mt. 18.10-14 // Lk. 15.4-7), given christological focus, and in this form able to serve as the basis of the fuller shepherd/sheep discourse of 10.1-30. So too, given John's freedom in developing earlier tradition, it is not hard to see 13.1-20 as an elaboration of the motif of lordship and service as illustrated by Jesus himself, as the earlier tradition had already indicated (Mk 10.42-45 // Jn 13.13-16). It is not possible to reach a confident verdict that Jesus actually did wash his disciples' feet on the occasion of the Last Supper: the silence of the Synoptics on such a powerfully inspirational action points in a different direction, as does the essentially theological point at the heart of the episode (albeit a minor Johannine theme in just these terms—13.10-11; 15.3; 1 Jn 1.7, 9). It would make better sense of our data if we can assume that John had contrived a symbolically typical expression of the character of Jesus' whole ministry as reaching its climax in his own self-giving on the cross (cf. again Mk 10.45). But if that is the case, we have four further examples of how utterances and motifs well rooted in the earliest memories of Jesus could be elaborated in subsequent usage in an extensive way, but one which proved quite acceptable to the Johannine community and (subsequently) to the Church at large.

e. Further elaborations of the Jesus tradition may be cited in the dialogues/discourses of Jn 4.7-26 and 6.25-28. The former cannot be tied to any core saying from the earlier tradition (that we know of) with any confidence. That of course does not necessarily imply that there was not such a saying, which the Synoptics simply neglected to use. If the material just reviewed (section 5d) is typical, it would seem that the Johannine re-use and retelling of earlier tradition worked by elaborating earlier, briefer units of tradition into a richer tapestry of teaching where the nuances of the earlier forms were explored and drawn out—typically by the technique of misunderstanding on the part of Jesus' auditors providing the occasion for further elaboration.

1. See further my *Jesus*, ch. 2; also *Christology in the Making* (London: SCM Press, 1980; 2nd edn, 1989), pp. 22-33.

But it may also be the case that John felt able to develop a whole episode and sequence of teaching on the basis of more fragmentary memories of a mission in Samaria and the theme of Jesus' teaching and Spirit as replacing the old Torah and cult (section 5c).¹ In the case of the great bread of life discourse, the strongest points of contact with earlier tradition are those with the words of institution at the Last Supper, and their influence is only clear (to the extent that it is so) in the last few verses of the whole discourse. The whole, so far as it is a whole, is best seen as an exposition of the text, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat' (6.31),² which, as such, lacks clear connection with the earlier tradition.

In other words, here too we should probably allow for a larger degree of creativity on the part of the Johannine tradition (than in the cases cited under section 5d), and should probably draw a similar conclusion as in the cases reviewed in section 5c. In view of section 5d, it might be possible to formulate a rule of thumb (and one which John himself would probably have accepted): the more removed from the core/earlier Jesus tradition any retelling of the Jesus tradition is, the less should it serve as the basis for further elaboration and the more strictly that retelling should be read within its primary context (here John's Gospel).

6. *Conclusions*

It is as impossible to deny that the themes and dialogues of John's Gospel are rooted in earlier tradition, as it is to deny that John's formulation is an elaboration (often considerable) of that tradition. The *historical rootage* consists of geographical details, particular traditions, broad outline of events (particularly the Passion narrative), individual sayings, specific themes or typical events;³ and while our methodology inevitably depends on demonstration of Synoptic or Synoptic-like parallels, we cannot exclude the possibility that material lacking actual Synoptic parallel was also rooted in historical tradition

1. In the Synoptics we could compare the birth narratives and the Temptation narrative of Mt. 4.1-11 // Lk. 4.1-13.

2. The classic study is P. Borgen, *Bread from Heaven* (Leiden: Brill, 1965).

3. How much is to be attributed specifically to 'the beloved disciple' it is impossible now to say.

neglected by the Synoptics. The *elaboration* seems to reflect the later situation confronting John and/or his community, and to consist principally of typical episodes used for their thematic value, midrashic or meditative elaboration of themes or sayings drawn from the earlier tradition, and all with a focus on the significance of Christ as the revealer of God, which is well in advance of the Synoptic tradition in its degree and consistency of development. The whole, however, is contained within the continuities of the traditioning process and held within the framework of the Gospel structure, as provided probably first for the Jesus tradition as a whole by Mark (driving forward to the climax of the Passion narrative).

So far as the oral Gospel tradition is concerned, we can draw the following conclusions.

1. Most of the earliest historical tradition within John reveals a degree of variation which makes John's direct dependence on one or more of the Synoptics as such highly unlikely, and which indicates rather a diversity in the traditioning process from the beginning. This finding also highlights an important corollary: the diversity of the tradition need not imply a long sequence of transmission with many links in the chain; the diversity could be the result of each tradition-bearer drawing directly on the earliest forms of various traditions and retelling them with his/her own emphases.

2. We can speak of a degree of fixity in such tradition—in the broad outline of the narrative or theme of the saying, and often too in particular points in the narrative. This suggests that there were fixed points in the oral tradition process, around which a story or the teaching drawn from such fixed points was constructed in the retelling. Since the fixed points are not necessarily of strong theological significance (e.g. most of the numbers in the feeding miracle), we may further deduce that such fixing of structural elements was simply part of the normal 'technique' of oral tradition rather than theologically motivated.

3. If John's own elaboration of such tradition is any guide, we also have to recognize a considerable degree of freedom permitted to the story-teller or teacher (tradition-passer-on). The extent of the freedom demonstrated by John appears somewhat alarming (and may have been so for many of the earliest Christians prior to Irenaeus's retrieval of John's Gospel), but we may presume that in John's eyes it was always under control of the fixed points of the earlier

tradition and held within the constraints of the Gospel itself (not least 1.14 and 19.34-35).¹ To that extent John's Gospel is probably best regarded as an *example* of how elaboration of the Jesus tradition did (and might) happen, rather than as a basis for further elaboration.

1. See further my *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1977; 2nd edn, 1990), pp. 296-305.

PAUL AND THE ORAL GOSPEL TRADITION

Traugott Holtz

1. *Jesus Tradition in the Synoptics*

In order to discuss the question about the extent and the form in which the Jesus tradition is contained in the letters of Paul, it will be useful first to put forward various chronological data. Despite recent attempts to claim an early date around AD 41,¹ we may still take as our starting point that the oldest Pauline letter available to us, 1 Thessalonians, was written about AD 50/51.² The latest letter to interest us here,³ Romans, was most probably composed in the year 56.⁴ The oldest Gospel, Mark, came into existence about a decade and a half later, about the year 70.⁵ It is harder to date precisely that collection of Jesus tradition which, failing a more exact description, is generally called 'Q' or—in view of the genre of the traditions it

1. Cf. G. Lüdemann, *Paulus, der Heidenapostel*, I (FRLANT, 123; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980), on which see T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (EKKNT, 13; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1986), pp. 21-23.

2. Cf. Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 19-20.

3. Philippians and Colossians offer no Jesus tradition that we can recognize (which of course does not exclude the possibility that they do contain some); cf. N. Walter, 'Paulus und die urchristliche Jesus-Tradition', *NTS* 31 (1985), p. 518 n.7.

4. Cf. P. Stuhlmacher, *Der Brief an die Römer* (NTD, 6; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), p. 11.

5. Cf. for example R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium*, I (HTKNT, 2; Freiburg: Herder, 1976), p. 14: 'soon after 70 AD'; M. Hengel, 'Probleme des Markusevangeliums', in P. Stuhlmacher (ed.), *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* (WUNT, 28; Tübingen: Mohr, 1983), p. 250 ('about 70'), p. 257 ('about 5 years after the death of Paul') (ET, *The Gospel and the Gospels* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], pp. 237, 243).

contains—the ‘sayings-source’.¹ The basic reason for this difficulty is that the collection in question is not a literary work formed by one planning and organizing mind, but a corpus in which fragments and complexes of tradition of precise origin and genre, that is, sayings of Jesus, were gathered together and handed on, presumably still in oral or similar form. Even on mnemotechnical grounds this does not exclude a conscious and reliable fixing and ordering of the material; on the other hand it does leave room, in the handing on and the use of the tradition, for a much greater elasticity than in the case of a closed literary work stemming from a single creative mind which prescribes every detail of the whole. In view of such a process of origin, precise dates for the creation of Q cannot be given; we cannot even determine the closure of the collection, for Matthew and Luke seem each to reflect a different stage of the collection. It is impossible, but also superfluous, to give reasons for theories about the beginnings of an organized collection of sayings of Jesus, or to try to be precise about the date of the fixing of relatively firm stages of the tradition. The formation of Q may well have begun in the period which gave us the letters of Paul and have come to some sort of conclusion in the time of Mark.² In this case the period of the letters of Paul is identical with the initial fixing and formulation of the tradition of words of Jesus. They are gaining a firm shape and coming together in complexes organized by content at the same period.

Essentially the history of the tradition of Q must be reconstructed from evidence provided by Matthew and Luke. But we can also gain a great deal of information about the handing on and use of the sayings of the Lord from the comparison of texts obviously handed down in Q with parallel traditions in Mark. There is clearly from the beginning one class of words of Jesus which are handed down in practically fixed form.³ Besides these, however, we meet traditions of whose common origin there is no question, but which diverge widely in their present form and application.⁴

1. Cf. the title of the book of S. Schulz, *Q, Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972).

2. Cf. W.G. Kümmel, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 21st edn, 1983), p. 44, who holds that the text, which he of course considers Q to be, was completed ‘not later than c. 50–70’.

3. Cf., for example, Mt. 7.2b; Lk. 6.38c; Mk 4.24b.

4. Cf., for example, the parable of the Lost Sheep, Mt. 18.12–14; Lk. 15.1–7.

An especially impressive and revealing example is provided by the pericope calling to watchfulness in Lk. 12.35-46 (48) in comparison to Mk 13.33-37 and Mt. 24.42-51. In this both elements appear, extensive fixed tradition¹ and traditions whose common origin can scarcely be discerned any longer.² It is remarkable how the almost identical passage Lk. 12.42-46 // Mt. 24.45-51a acquires a new and pointed paraenetical thrust merely through insertion in a context (Lk. 12.41) and by minute changes of the text (οἰκονόμος in Lk. 12.42 instead of the δοῦλος of Mt. 24.45).

The history of the tradition of the sayings of Jesus, glimpsed as it can be by such means, shows that words of Jesus were handed down side by side in verbally fixed form and in extremely free presentation. In the complex we have just considered, Lk. 12.35-46, we are presumably dealing, in all three individual passages (vv. 36-38, 39-40, 42-46), with words whose origin in fact goes back to Jesus himself. However, the question whether the passage handed down in the tradition as a word of Jesus is historically correctly so described is of only limited interest for the problem which we are studying at present. However such traditions came into being, those responsible for handing them on took as their sure starting point that they were handing on genuine traditions of Jesus.

2. Explicit Jesus Tradition in Paul

The use of the Jesus tradition in Paul quite obviously reflects a situation wholly similar to the one we have deduced from an analysis of the sayings tradition as we saw it in the Gospels. A starting point for its assessment must be that the Jesus tradition encountered in the letters of Paul is generally one of an oral nature. For the verbally fixed form of tradition, 1 Cor. 11.23-25 is an example, with its use of the tradition-terms παραλαμβάνειν and παραδιδόναι in the introductory v. 23.³ Of course it becomes clear at the same time that no sharp distinction on the grounds of the fixed nature of the individual

1. Cf. Lk. 12.39-40 // Mt. 24.43-44, or Lk. 12.42-46 // Mt. 24.45-51a.

2. Cf. Lk. 12.36-38 // Mk 13.33-37 (Mt. 24.42).

3. Cf. B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (ASNU, 22; Lund: Gleerup, 1961), pp. 290, 331-32; J. Jeremias, *Die Abendmahlsworte Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), p. 95.

traditions can be made between traditions fixed orally or in writing. Orality is no bar to complete fixedness. And an accidental fixing in writing which may have happened by chance (as it did in the case of 1 Cor. 11.23-25) is at this stage no more than accidental and makes no difference to the specifically oral character of the tradition. It may be taken as a starting point that all the Jesus tradition we meet in Paul is oral in character.

With the tradition of the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 11.23-25 we encountered a passage that was obviously taken over by Paul (παρέλαβον) in wholly fixed verbal form, and which was still to remain long fixed in the same form, at least as regards its central portion concerning the actions and words of Jesus. This is shown by Lk. 22.19-20.¹ In this it corresponds to the one Synoptic thread of the Jesus tradition in which it is handed on largely in fixed form.

No other example of similar clarity occurs in the Pauline literature. It is remarkable that the same is virtually the case for the rest of the New Testament letters. This merits more attention in assessing the whole phenomenon of the Jesus tradition outside the Gospels than it normally receives. None of the remaining passages in which Paul explicitly appeals to a tradition of Jesus betrays any verbal fixity.

In 1 Cor. 7.10-11 Paul appeals to Jesus' teaching on divorce which has been handed down to us with distinct variation in the Synoptic tradition of Mk 10.9-12 // Mt. 19.6, 9; 5.31-32; Lk. 16.18. Paul follows none of the Synoptic forms;² he reproduces their content but fits their verbal form into his own context. This is especially true of the parenthesis of v. 11a, in which additionally the second part, the counsel of reconciliation, certainly stems from Paul as regards its content as well. In form its presentation is fitted to the present text and its situation, although it is closely dependent on the instructions of the Lord received in the tradition.

In 1 Cor. 9.14 Paul again explicitly appeals to an instruction of the

1. See the analysis of R. Pesch, *Das Abendmahl und Jesu Todesverständnis* (QD, 80; Freiburg: Herder, 1978), pp. 31-34. If the long text of Luke is a later interpolation (and Pesch inclines to this view) then there is evidence for even longer continuation of this (oral) tradition.

2. Cf., for example, the interesting analysis in D. Wenham, 'Paul's Use of the Jesus Tradition: Three Samples', in his *Gospel Perspectives*, V (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), pp. 7-15.

Lord,¹ but he obviously gives only the content of this instruction without reproducing it verbally. In any case the remaining Jesus tradition contains no saying corresponding formally to v. 14. Paul must be building on the saying handed down in Mt. 10.10 // Lk. 10.7 in a mission discourse: the labourer is worthy of his livelihood/reward.² That Paul is thinking of this saying of Jesus is immediately obvious. This is convincingly shown by 1 Tim. 5.18. This verse

is unambiguously dependent on 1 Cor. 9.8-14. Paul's grounds for the apostolic claim to board and lodging, for the remoulding of the quotation of Deut. 25.4 into a divine command which prescribes a fitting reward for toiling human beings, is authentically Pauline.³

The deutero-Pauline author of 1 Timothy is unquestionably true to Paul's intentions when he identifies 1 Cor. 9.14 with Lk. 10.7 or with a corresponding saying in the sayings source.⁴ This process is extraordinarily instructive for our attitude to the Jesus tradition. Paul appeals to an instruction of Jesus, gives its factual content in so far as it is necessary for the context of his argument, but does not quote the saying of Jesus which he envisages, although he surely had it in mind in a fixed form of words. Unfortunately conjectures as to whether the recipients of 1 Corinthians knew the saying which is Paul's starting point and whether they make a conscious association with the text are simply unprovable and hence pointless. No more can we know whether Paul assumes this. The author of 1 Timothy was in a position to make this association, and he correspondingly makes his text more precise. In his own formulation of the Lord's instruction, his argument is no longer independent of the fixed form of words; rather he reproduces exactly the saying as it was handed down. In the meantime it had gained an authority which made it verbally unalterable; it has

1. On the *kyrios*-title here and also 7.10, cf. C. Wolff, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther*, II (THKNT, 7.2; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1982), p. 26.

2. J. Weiss (*Der erste Korintherbrief* [KEK, 75; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910]), takes for granted that Paul presupposes the wording of Mt. 10.10 // Lk. 10.7 as already known in Corinth.

3. J. Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus* (EKKNT, 15; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), p. 305, esp. n. 407.

4. On the view that 1 Tim. 5.18 takes up a common maxim rather than a saying of the Lord, see Roloff, *Timotheus*, pp. 305-306 n. 409.

become 'Scripture' (γραφή).¹ In the time of Paul this was clearly not the case: the saying of Jesus had indeed high authority as ἐπιταγή κυρίου² so far as its content went, but this did not yet extend to the form of words which could be fitted to the actual context.

3. *1 Thessalonians 4.13–5.11*

The state of affairs so far considered is especially clearly represented in 1 Thess. 4.13–5.11. First the apostle comes to grips in 4.13–18 with the sorrow of the community at Thessalonica over the dead. I cannot here enter into the details of the background of the situation to which Paul is reacting.³ Obviously the predominantly non-Jewish (1.9–10) members of the community had not been able to relate the Pauline proclamation of the Parousia which 'we' (Paul and the recipients of the letter) would experience⁴ to the experience of the death of members of the community. Paul assures the community of the certainty of resurrection first by expressing the confession of the resurrection of Jesus (v. 14) and then by an appeal to a 'saying of the Lord' (λόγος κυρίου). Despite currently widespread objection,⁵ the most probable interpretation must be to understand λόγος κυρίου as a designation of a received saying of Jesus. 1 Cor. 7.10, 12, 25; 9.14 all use simply κύριος to designate the author in connection with sayings of Jesus. 1 Cor. 7.12 links λέγειν with it.⁶ A further matter of controversy is which verses, v. 15b or vv. 16–17, contain the saying of Jesus quoted. Whatever decision is made on this question, the saying handed down must have been considerably altered verbally in order to accommodate it to its present interpretation. With regard to v. 15b this is true certainly for its presentation in the first person (through ἡμεῖς and the corresponding verb-form), which must come from

1. Cf. Roloff, *Timotheus*, p. 309, for the reference of ἡ γραφή not only to Deut. 25.4 but also to the 'Jesus-tradition used as a norm'.

2. So 1 Cor. 7.25, although here in a negative sense.

3. Cf. Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 186–87.

4. Cf. vv. 15, 17.

5. Cf. F. Neirynck, 'Paul and the Sayings of Jesus', in A. Vanhoye (ed.), *L'Apôtre Paul* (BETL, 73; Paris: Gembloux, 1986), pp. 265–321, esp. 310–11; Walter, 'Paulus', pp. 507–508.

6. It makes no difference that the fact that the Lord 'spoke' upon the particular subject is denied; indeed it strengthens the argument.

Paul; possibly it is true also for the addition (in any case secondary) of the words οἱ ζῶντες. For the expression εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ κυρίου a judgment is difficult, but in any case τοῦ κυρίου can hardly have belonged to the most ancient form. With regard to vv. 16-17 the ἐν Χριστῷ beside νεκροί must be considered an addition, but above all again ἡμεῖς (οἱ ζῶντες) and the first person form of the verb in v. 17.

The exact analysis of both sayings, although it cannot be set out here, permits the highly probable conclusion that the 'saying of the Lord' intended is contained in v. 15b.¹ Paul quotes it, but at the same time alters it in such a way that its relevance to the context and its force in the present situation are sharpened. But at the same time it must be noted that he retains exactly the content of the saying handed down to him, although it thereby fits only awkwardly into the logic of the statement. The goal of his proof is the certainty of resurrection, but the 'saying of the Lord' speaks of the simultaneity of participation in salvation by the living and the dead at the Parousia. The saying thus presupposes the resurrection of the dead, and this is how it fits into Paul's process of thought: if the living will not even get ahead of the dead on the day of the Parousia, then it follows that the resurrection of the dead is utterly certain. For our problem what is remarkable is that although Paul takes up a remarkably free stance towards the wording of the saying, which he explicitly denotes as a 'saying of the Lord', nevertheless he leaves its content unchanged even though it serves his purpose only awkwardly.

The manner in which the proof is conducted corresponds to Jewish-rabbinic exegesis.² The handling of the wording has parallels in Paul's treatment of the Old Testament.³ It shows that, even with explicit relationship to the authority of the κύριος, the text remains applicable to the context. Its form remains open to a use which fits context and situation.

The following section, 1 Thess. 5.1-4, contains no explicit connec-

1. Cf. Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, pp. 184-85.

2. Cf., for example, H.L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch* (Münich: Beck, 1982), pp. 25-40.

3. Cf., for example, O. Michel, *Paulus und seine Bibel* (BFCT, 2.18; Gutersloh: Bertelsmann, 1929), pp. 73-83; D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums* (BHT, 69; Tübingen: Mohr, 1986).

tion with any Jesus tradition. But there can be no reasonable doubt that the statement about the 'Day of the Lord', that it comes 'like a thief in the night', uses a parable of Jesus. This occurs in Mt. 24.43 // Lk. 12.39. Further use is made of it in the New Testament at 2 Pet. 3.10; Rev. 3.3; 16.15. The audacity of the image, but also its widespread use in the New Testament and the impossibility of attributing it to Judaism, leave no doubt about its derivation from the Jesus tradition.¹ Paul does not mention this origin, but presumably alludes to it by means of ἀκριβῶς.² The reference to the Thessalonians' exact knowledge in this sphere presupposes that he had taught them thus and had imparted to them the knowledge of which he is reminding them and presumably by appeal to the saying of Jesus. But again it is inserted into its own context with considerable freedom.

No firm decision can be made as to whether the content of the saying is changed with regard to the original tradition. In the so-called Q tradition 'the coming of the Son of Man' is spoken of, in Revelation 'the arrival of Christ'. In 1 Thess. 5.2 on the other hand, as in 2 Pet. 3.10, the thought is of the 'Day of the Lord'. The possibility cannot be excluded that this last reference is the more original³ and was transmitted to Paul by the tradition he received. In any case he accommodated the parabolic saying into his text in such a way that only the content rather than the fixed wording is binding for him. This obligation springs from awareness of the origin of the saying, but does not need to be mentioned explicitly.

The following verse, 1 Thess. 5.3, also has a remarkable connection to the Jesus tradition, namely to the ending of the apocalyptic discourse in the Lukan version, Lk. 21.34-36.⁴ The closeness of the two texts extends not merely to the content but even to the wording. The words αἰφνίδιος and ἐφίστημι occur in both texts, and of these αἰφνίδιος occurs only here in the New Testament, ἐφίστημι only

1. Against W. Harnisch, *Eschatologische Existenz* (FRLANT, 110; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), pp. 84-116, esp. 93-95; cf. my review, *TLZ* 99 (1974), pp. 252-55.

2. The word occurs in Paul only here.

3. Cf. J. Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 6th edn, 1962), pp. 46-47.

4. Cf. the analysis of D. Wenham, 'Paul and the Synoptic Apocalypse', in R.T. France and D. Wenham (eds.), *Gospel Perspectives*, II (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), pp. 353-56.

here in Paul. The use of ἐκφεύγειν in both Luke¹ and Paul is remarkable, in that the word has a good sense in connection with παγίς (Luke) but not in connection with ὁδόν (Paul). Presumably both Greek nouns go back to the same Semitic original כַּבֵּל, which can mean either 'labour pains' (כְּבֵל) or 'trap' (תְּבֵל) according to the vocalization.² The verb fits 'trap' well, but not 'labour pains'. This is a clear indication that the texts are related to each other in the tradition, and at the same time shows the common basis that existed at the stage before the transfer into Greek.

Despite the paraenetic introduction to the passage in Luke, the factual link with Paul is unmistakable. According to Paul the Last Judgment occurs suddenly and unavoidably just when worldly self-confidence has reached its peak; Luke warns against a coarsening through devotion to the world so that the Day of the Lord strikes suddenly and unavoidably. There can be no reasonable doubt that the two texts are related to each other. Immediate dependence, of the kind of direct literary dependence that has recently been argued for Luke on Paul,³ cannot be assumed because of the obvious independence of the passages. Rather use of a common tradition must be the answer. Since an important difference between them can be explained from a shared Semitic basis, this must go back to the early times of the community in the (Syro-)Palestinian area. The handing on of this tradition from such a primitive time and from the cradle of the Christian community is an argument that its attribution to Jesus, which Luke attests, is original or at least very early. It may therefore be assumed that the tradition used by Paul in 1 Thess. 5.3 goes back to Jesus—exactly as was the case for the preceding verse. Granted, we are not in a position to determine the amount of alteration which Paul makes to that tradition. Perhaps the theory occasionally put forward⁴ is correct, that the expression εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια is connected with a fixed formula *pax et securitas* of the early Imperial era; in this case it contains a conscious adoption of an expression which originally

1. Otherwise not attested in the Gospels.

2. Cf. Holtz, *Thessalonicher*, p. 216; in the opposite sense L. Aejmelaeus, *Wehen vor dem Ende* (Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft, 44; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia, 1985), pp. 120-21.

3. Thus Aejmelaeus, *Wehen*.

4. Cf. E. Bammel, 'Ein Beitrag zur paulinischen Staatsanschauung', *TLZ* 85 (1960), p. 837.

draws on a saying of the false prophets known from the Old Testament (Jer. 6.14; Ezek. 13.10). This is, however, uncertain, for ἀσφάλεια can be no more than a simple variant of εἰρήνη. Perhaps Paul removed a warning against debauchery and drunkenness (Lk. 21.34) from the saying in the tradition, and independently used the exhortation drawn from it (vv. 6b-8). But this is mere conjecture.

Why did Paul here apply what we have taken to be Jesus tradition? The suggestion must be put forward that he found it firmly linked in the tradition with the saying which he used in v. 2. This cannot be proved, because the two passages do not adjoin in a synopsis. All the same, in Matthew the saying about the thief comes at the very place in the course of Jesus' eschatological discourse at which the Lukan text parallel to 1 Thess. 5.3 occurs. This makes it seem possible that an older tradition contained both pieces linked together.

In any case Paul uses this tradition also with remarkable freedom as regards its form, quotes it without explicitly mentioning the Jesus tradition and inserts it almost without a visible seam into his own context and his own process of thought. The tradition is seen by its concrete application to be flexible, its factual content is applied to the situation, but at the same time its substance clearly remains unaltered. Consideration of 1 Cor. 9.14 and 1 Tim. 5.18 showed that a generation later it was possible to verify and quote the saying of the Lord which is founded on a loose appeal by Paul to a command of Jesus. This encourages the suggestion that for Paul, too, fixed traditions stood behind his loose appeal to the Jesus tradition, and that these could be reproduced and could assure the legitimacy of a particular application. If this suggestion is correct we must conceive the fixed Jesus tradition, the whole of which we cannot see (though Paul can, as 1 Cor. 7.25 shows!), as essentially fixed in the memory, not in writing. This is not contradicted by the fact that at the same time it may incidentally have been fixed in writing.

4. Allusions to the Jesus Tradition

1 Thess. 4.15 shows that we no longer have at our disposal the whole extent of the Jesus tradition which was available to Paul.¹

1. On the other hand it must also be held in mind that Paul did not know the whole of the Gospel tradition which has come down to us in the Gospels.

Consequently we must assume that a whole series of uses of the Jesus tradition in particular contexts in Paul remains unrecognizable to us.

Meanwhile there is nevertheless a series of passages, beyond those already mentioned, in which we may, with a high degree of probability, reckon on conscious reference to the tradition received from Jesus, even though certainty as a rule eludes us. The principal passages in question have frequently been investigated, with varying methods and results.¹ I cannot here provide another detailed analysis of these passages, which in any case would only lead to more or less well-founded conjectures.

In Rom. 14.14 Paul explicitly appeals to the Lord Jesus with the sentence, 'Nothing is in itself unclean'. Certainly it is 'not clear whether Paul thereby alludes to the teaching of Jesus (cf. Mk 7.15 par., Lk. 11.41 par.) or whether he in fact emphasizes the truth of this sentence as based on the authority of the risen Lord'.² But in any case we may assume that this 'basic principle of the teaching of the hellenistic Church',³ so radically different from Jewish belief, is founded on the Jesus tradition. The similarity of the wording of Rom. 14.14 to Mk 7.15 (οὐδὲν ἔστιν . . . ὃ δύνатаι κοινῶσαι) makes it, in connection with the explicit appeal to Jesus, probable that Paul knew and was conscious of the basis of this sentence in Jesus' words. Both form and content of the procedure are directly in line with the use of the Jesus tradition that we have encountered hitherto.

Although there is no direct reference to an authorization by Jesus, we must also reckon with the possibility that Paul consciously alludes to the tradition of the controversy with the scribes in Mk 12.28-34 in the case of the statements in Gal. 5.14 and Rom. 13.8-10 that the whole law is summed up and fulfilled in the command of love of neighbour in Lev. 19.18. The audacious summing up of the whole law in the command of love (πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη, Rom. 13.10) can scarcely be understood except against the background of the Jesus tradition. The lack of the first part of Jesus' double com-

1. Cf. most recently the thorough analysis of F. Neirynck ('Sayings of Jesus'), although his methodological principles lead him to minimize Paul's reliance on the Jesus tradition.

2. U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, III (EKKNT, 6.3; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1989), p. 91.

3. Wilckens, *Römer*, p. 91.

mandment can hardly count against this. Both in Galatians and in Romans Paul proclaims the command of love of neighbour as the essence of the law in the context of exhortation where only the second part is relevant. The first part, which concerns the love of God, has been given full play by Paul in the preceding treatment of the basis of faith. Nevertheless no decision has yet been made, nor in fact could be made, about how far Paul in these sentences is explicitly conscious of the Jesus tradition. But it may certainly be taken for granted that in fact such a summing up of the law is founded on the Jesus tradition and presupposes that it was binding in the early community.

Rom. 13.7 contains so clear an echo of Mk 12.17 par. that 'the presumption is inescapable that the Jesus-saying in Rom. 13.7, or at least the connection made there... is taken or drawn from the oral tradition'.¹ Of course there can be no proof that Paul is consciously and deliberately referring to the saying of Jesus. Nevertheless this would be thoroughly intelligible in view of the delicate theme which he is handling in Rom. 13.1-7 in general, and in the concluding vv. 6-7 in particular.² Besides, it is questionable whether Paul could take for granted that the Roman community, which he had not founded and which he did not know, would understand the allusion of this sentence and the authority which it contained.

Also Rom. 12.14 and 1 Cor. 4.12-13 must reflect a Jesus tradition which we meet in the Gospel tradition in varying forms in Mt. 5.43-44 and Lk. 6.27-28. The tradition is used also in *Did.* 1.3 and indeed in an especially interesting way.³ The text is clearly formed in close dependence on Matthew and Luke, but is quite obviously meant to be a quotation of a saying of Jesus without Jesus being named as author. It looks as though such a text stands midway between a free allusion to a saying of Jesus and an explicit and flagged quotation of a saying of the

1. G. Dellling, *Römer 13, 1-7 innerhalb der Briefe des Neuen Testaments* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1962), pp. 16-17; similarly L. Goppelt, *Christologie und Ethik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), p. 217; more hesitantly Wilckens, *Römer*, p. 91.

2. Cf. also Stuhlmacher, *Römer*, pp. 179-80.

3. On the relationship of *Did.* 1.3 to the Gospel tradition, cf. H. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern* (TU, 65; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957), pp. 220-26, 238-39. If the passage *Did.* 1.3-2.1 as a whole was taken over by the Didachist from older tradition, as W. Rordorf in his essay in this volume assumes, it becomes an even richer piece of evidence.

Lord in a firmly fixed form. The ground of the free allusion, on which Paul is still standing, has already been left, but the territory of a careful and well-marked proof through a fixed saying has not yet been reached. This also corresponds quite exactly to the chronological position where we should look for the author of *Did.* 1.3–2.1. The comparison with *Did.* 1.3 makes it thoroughly probable that in Rom. 12.14 and 1 Cor. 14.12–13 Paul was conscious that he was adopting sayings of Jesus into his own speech.

5. Conclusions

The foregoing observations continue avenues of discussion opened up by L. Goppelt almost twenty years ago.¹ On the basis of research on the relationships of 1 Cor. 7.10, Rom. 13.7 and Rom. 12.14, 17 to the Jesus tradition he reckons with two distinct lines of tradition, on the one hand the 'gospel tradition' and on the other the 'parenthetic tradition', both set down in the corpus of letters.

The gospel tradition aims to relate the sayings primarily as proclamation in Jesus' situation, that is, as a call to conversion to the coming kingdom; the parenthetic tradition presents them as exemplary aids to behaviour from the exalted Lord to his community.²

The availability of two distinct modes of tradition has ostensibly become accepted. As well as a Jesus tradition relatively fixed and handed down in this way, there is a Jesus tradition which enabled the saying of Jesus to be formed loosely in connection with its content according to each context (both of word and in history) in which it was to be effective. Certainly these two traditions have not shown themselves to be strictly differentiated. Already in the so-called Q tradition there obviously existed side-by-side a strictly fixed and a clearly loose form of the handing on of the sayings of Jesus which was immediately open to the situational context which caused them to be written down. 1 Cor. 11.23–25 shows that Paul was by no means unacquainted with the firmly fixed form of the Jesus tradition.³

1. 'Jesus und die "Haustafel"-Tradition', in P. Hoffmann (ed.), *Orientierung an Jesus* (Festschrift J. Schmid; Freiburg: Herder, 1973), pp. 93–106.

2. Goppelt, *Christologie*, p. 103.

3. The passage surely presupposes far more knowledge of the story of Jesus than it actually shows.

Primarily, however, we encounter in Paul the other approach to the tradition of the sayings of the Lord, according to which the saying of Jesus is expressed directly in Paul's own words, without, of course, it being possible to regard this as Paul's own personal quirk. Presumably in all such cases a saying of Jesus handed down in a fixed form stands in the background, which at a later period takes the place of the loose allusion in the earlier period. *Did.* 1.3 and 1 Tim. 5.18 mark stages on this route.

This provides us with a result which stands midway between the positions of D.L. Dungan¹ and L. Goppelt. The treatment of the Jesus tradition in Paul is normally sharply distinguished from that of the Synoptic Gospels, which explicitly reproduce the words of Jesus. But the body of tradition of sayings of the Lord received by Paul is not basically of a different kind; rather it is essentially of the same kind as that presented in the Gospels. But the early period obviously possessed the freedom to put the sayings of Jesus known to it into its own words addressed to the present time, and in this way lend the words such forceful authority.

1. *The Sayings of Jesus in the Churches of Paul* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971).

DOES THE DIDACHE CONTAIN JESUS TRADITION INDEPENDENTLY OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS?

Willy Rordorf

The subject given to me was simply 'The Jesus tradition in the second century'. This is such a vast subject that it cannot be treated in a short final paper; it could have provided material for another week-long Conference. Since the main topic of our Symposium is 'Oral tradition before, inside and outside the Gospels', the relevant second-century material can be divided on these lines too. Basically I see three possibilities:

1. Research into the textual tradition of the canonical Gospels. This would have been the topic 'Jesus tradition inside the Gospels'.
2. Research into the extracanonical Jesus tradition, the area of the so-called 'Agrapha' to be found in the New Testament Apocrypha and partly in the Church Fathers. This would have been the topic 'Jesus tradition outside the Gospels'. Since the discoveries at Nag Hammadi this material has grown enormously. Correspondingly, scholarly literature on the subject has passed all limits. How much has been published in the last 40 years on the *Gospel of Thomas* alone! I have no intention of casting myself adrift on this ocean.¹
3. Finally, an attempt to determine whether the oral Jesus tradition which received a written expression in the canonical Gospels also continued beside and beyond this written form. This is, so to speak, the question how 'the oral tradition' existed 'before the Gospels' and then partly 'inside the Gospels'

1. A good conspectus of the literature may be found in the article 'Agrapha' by O. Hofius in *TRE*, II, pp. 103-110.

and partly 'outside the Gospels'. This seems to me the most exciting question of all for New Testament exegetes. For a precise comprehensive treatment of the Synoptic problem the consideration of the extracanonical material is extraordinarily important.

I have decided to select one aspect of this last topic. And because I shared with André Tuilier the task of editing the *Didache* for 'Sources Chrétiennes' (No. 248; Paris: Cerf, 1978), I would like to put this text forward as a test case for the problem under discussion. Both before and since 1978 intensive research has been done on this work. Not only have two commentaries been recently published,¹ but in the last year two investigations have been done on precisely the question which concerns us here, namely whether or not the Synoptic Gospels are used in the *Didache*.² So at the present time everything is in flux again, and my intention is to consider the matter anew and from my own perspective with regard to these new studies. Since they are complementary to each other, I can present them simultaneously and then add my own reaction.

It must of course be clear from the outset that the answer to the question whether the Synoptic Gospels use the *Didache* is closely dependent on the date given to the final edition of the *Didache*. A scholar who places the final edition in the first century or at the very beginning of the second will be concerned to check out thoroughly the claim that the *Didache* did not use the Synoptic Gospels, whereas one who is convinced that the *Didache* cannot have come into existence before the middle of the second century will find this question almost meaningless.³ Especially here is it essential to beware of arguing in a circle. In any case it would be a great mistake to establish the date of

1. K. Wengst, *Didache (Apostellehre), Barnabasbrief, Zweiter Klemensbrief, Schrift an Diognet* (SUC, 2; Munich: Kösel, 1984); K. Niederwimmer, *Die Didache* (Erg.-reihe zum Kritisch-exegetischen Kommentar über das Neue Testament, 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989).

2. C.M. Tuckett, 'Synoptic Tradition in the Didache', in *The New Testament in Early Christianity: La réception des écrits néotestamentaires dans le christianisme primitif* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1989), pp. 197-230.

3. Jefford shows in his report (*The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* [Leiden: Brill, 1989], pp. 3-17) that in this connection it is possible to speak of a 'French', a 'German' and an 'Anglo-Saxon School'.

the editing of the *Didache* on other grounds, and then declare that this implicitly solved the question of the dependence or independence of the *Didache* on the Synoptic Gospels. Rather this latter question must first be dealt with on its own, and then must form an important building-block together with other criteria in the attempt to date the *Didache*.

The *Didache* cannot, of course, be considered a homogeneous text. Even those who attempt to attribute it to a single editor must unhesitatingly grant that older material is used in it. This is especially true of the first five chapters, which contain the teaching on the Two Ways. My procedure will be first to examine this doctrine of the Two Ways, and especially the so-called 'Evangelical Section' (1.3b-5) which is included in this teaching and is particularly close to the Synoptic tradition; only after this will we come to consider the rest of the *Didache*.

1. *The Doctrine of the Two Ways*

The Old Testament and Jewish roots of the doctrine of the Two Ways were noted immediately after the original publication of the *Didache* by Bryennios in 1883.¹ The question gained new urgency through the discoveries at Qumran, because the *Rule of the Community* (3.13-4.26) now provides a teaching connected both in outline and in content with that of the *Didache*. Naturally this discovery was pressed into service for research without delay.²

Nevertheless, not all problems have yet been solved. Above all there is the puzzling fact that the doctrine of the Two Ways is differently presented in the three most ancient Christian sources which contain it, namely *Didache* 1-5, *Barnabas* 18-20 and the Latin *Doctrina Apostolorum*.³ The controversy no longer centres, as it once did, on which source is dependent on which other, for a common Jewish source has been accepted as lying behind them all. But that is not the end of the matter, for in *Barnabas* and the *Doctrina Apostolorum* the

1. Cf. C. Taylor, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles with Illustrations from the Talmud* (Cambridge, 1886); A. von Harnack, *Die Apostellehre und die jüdischen beiden Wege* (Leipzig, 1886; 2nd edn, 1896).

2. J-P. Audet led the way in 'Affinités littéraires et doctrinales du Manuel de discipline', *RB* 59 (1952), pp. 219-38, then in his commentary *La Didaché, instruction des apôtres* (Paris: Gabalda, 1958).

3. In our edition (SC, 248), A. Tuilier published it on pp. 203-10.

doctrine of the Two Ways evinces a dualistic eschatological framework that is largely absent from the *Didache*, which is closer to the Old Testament Wisdom tradition.

It is not our task to enter upon these difficult questions. But the problem must be mentioned because the opening sentences of the *Didache* (1.1-2) already contain echoes of the Synoptic tradition, and we therefore need to know whether we are standing on the ground of the pure Jewish tradition of the Two Ways, or whether the organizing hand of the Christian editor is already at work.

I am grateful to Jefford for subjecting precisely these opening sentences to a critical examination (pp. 22-38). I follow his presentation verse by verse.

Didache 1.1

Since the opening phrase of the doctrine of the Two Ways appears in the *Didache*—by contrast to *Barnabas* and the *Doctrina Apostolorum*—in non-dualistic form, Jefford argues (especially p. 24, note 4) that this phrase was at least not yet connected with the doctrine of the Two Ways in the source used by the Didachist and that this theme was introduced by the editor. He compares the theme with Mt. 7.13-14 // Lk. 13.23-24. In a first step he reaches the conclusion that Mt. 7.13-14 cannot derive from the sayings-source Q but must be drawn from Matthew's special material.¹ In a second step he reckons to prove that the editor has inserted the Two Ways at the beginning on catechetical grounds (pp. 26-27). Finally he concludes (pp. 28-29) that *Didache* 1.1 and the special material behind Mt. 7.13-14 derive from the same source.

These elaborations are richly hypothetical. While to me personally the first conclusion is enlightening—though I cannot really evaluate it—I would reply to the second step that the assumed anchoring of the framework of the Two Ways in Jewish (possibly catechetical) material is precisely derived from the comparison with *Barnabas* and the *Doctrina Apostolorum*; only the weakening of the dualistic components is attributed to the Didachist. To the final point I have nothing to

1. *Sayings*, pp. 25-26. I would like to refer to the important 'Appendix A: Q 13:23-24 (Matt 7:13-14/Luke 13:23-24)', pp. 146-149, which also gives a glimpse of the project of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity in Claremont, centred on the sayings-source Q, under the direction of James M. Robinson.

say at all: its basis seems to me altogether too narrow.

Didache 1.2

It seems to me that Jefford (pp. 29-38) has something extremely important to say on this verse, which concerns the combination of the double command of love with the Golden Rule which follows immediately.¹ I myself have hitherto paid far too little attention to the facts here presented. The important consequences of these insights for the evaluation of the following verses (*Did.* 1.2b-5) earn a more leisurely treatment.

First it must be noted that, while the Synoptics unanimously (Mt. 22.37-39; Mk 12.30-31; Lk. 10.27) use the LXX text of Deut. 6.5, the *Didache* (1.2a; cf. *Barn.* 19.2a) offers a text unique but typical of dependence on the Jewish sources: κύριος is omitted, but τὸν ποιήσαντά σε is added. On the other hand it must be granted that the combination of the command to love God and neighbour—in contrast to the parallel tradition in *Barnabas* (19.2a, 5c)—must be ascribed to the Didachist. Is, then, the Didachist dependent on the Synoptic tradition in this passage? On this point Jefford (pp. 33-34²) seems to me to prove very convincingly that it is not the case; rather the Didachist as well as the Gospel of Matthew draws on a 'free-floating' tradition which derives neither from Mark nor from the sayings-source Q. Nor can the Golden Rule in *Did.* 1.2c, appearing in its normal, negative form, derive from the positive formulation which appears in Q.

It is certainly best for me here to quote at length Jefford's corresponding conclusion (pp. 36-37).

With respect to *Did.* 1.2 we are thus left with a situation whereby:

1. the Didachist is dependent upon the Two Ways source for the *ordering* of the individual sayings and for the suggestion of the inclusion of the 'double love commandment' near to the motif of the Two Ways;
2. the Didachist knew and used a tradition of the double love commandment that did not stem from the Markan tradition or from the Sayings Gospel Q;

1. Really this implies that I find the brief comments of Tuckett on this verse ('Synoptic Tradition', pp. 210-11) insufficiently developed to be convincing.

2. Jefford (*Sayings*, p. 34 nn. 36-37), appeals to A.J. Hultgren, 'The Double Commandment of Love in Matt 22:34-40: its Sources and Composition', *CBQ* 36 (1974), pp. 373-78.

3. the Didachist knew and used a tradition of the Golden Rule that also did not stem from the Sayings Gospel Q; and
4. the presence of the Golden Rule in *Did.* 1.2 was not suggested by either the Two Ways source or the 'double love commandment' of the Markan tradition.

Several features of the Matthean Gospel suggest that the Matthean redactor recognized to some extent the same set of elements as that from which the Didachist derived *Did.* 1.2:

1. the Matthean redactor, alone among the Synoptic writers, places the Golden Rule in close proximity to a statement of the Two Ways (Mt. 7.12-14);
2. the Matthean redactor probably knew and incorporated a tradition of the 'double love commandment' that did not stem from the Markan or Q traditions (as is argued above);
3. though the Matthean redactor used the Q version of the Golden Rule, much of the terminology of the Matthean rendering is similar to that of *Did.* 1.2b; and
4. the Matthean redactor appears to recognize the significance of the 'double love commandment' in connection with the Golden Rule, as is indicated by the uniquely Matthean conclusion that appears in each instance: Mt. 7.12b; 22.40. . . This notation concerning the 'double love commandment' and the Golden Rule as the summation of 'the law and the prophets' appears only here in the Gospels, and thus may imply that the Matthean redactor was familiar with a tradition in which the 'double love commandment' and the Golden Rule were recognized as two elements of a single *inclusio* concerning the parameters of the OT law.

For our purposes, it is *not* significant that the phrase was used as an indicator of the summation of the law, since this was a common practice in early Jewish circles. It *is* significant that the Matthean redactor uses this phrase to underscore two sayings that come from different OT sources, which the Didachist also considered to be the essence of the 'Way of Life', since this lends some support for the position that the Didachist and the Matthean redactor are dependent upon a common tradition of scriptural interpretation.

These conclusions of Jefford seem to me wholly decisive if we now proceed to bring the so-called Evangelical Section (*Did.* 1.3a-5) into consideration. For I believe that Jefford himself failed to draw the obvious conclusions. But first I would like to make a résumé of his research on this passage. In this I have primarily in mind the explanation of this passage which Tuckett added to the published form of the

lecture he gave at the 1986 *Journées d'études bibliques* in Louvain.¹ Both scholars reach similar conclusions, which is the more remarkable in that each pursued his researches independently of the other. I must, however, admit that I find Jefford's remarks on this passage disappointing in comparison with those of Tuckett; Tuckett's work is—after that of H. Köster—incomparably the most careful and comprehensive study of the problem that I know.²

Since the section *Did.* 1.3b–2.1 is lacking in an important part of the textual tradition (it does not occur, for instance, in *Barnabas* or the *Doctrina Apostolorum*), and since it consists entirely of sayings of Jesus which we know in similar form also from the Synoptic tradition, and therefore can have nothing to do with the Jewish tradition which lies behind *Did.* 1–5, and since, finally, it clearly interrupts the connection between *Did.* 1.2 and 2.2, it is clear that we are here confronted by an interpolation. The question is only whether it goes back to the Didachist himself, or whether it represents a later insertion.

In another article³ I have investigated this interpolation more closely, and I came to the conclusion that it must be ascribed to the Didachist, that is, to the compiler who added chs. 7–13 to the Two Ways. Unfortunately Jefford was not aware of this study. It would perhaps have prevented him simply taking as his point of departure that it was here a question of the latest stratum of the *Didache*.⁴

1. 'Synoptic Tradition', pp. 214–30.

2. Especially noteworthy in earlier literature are: H. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern* (TU, 65; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957); R. Glover, 'The Didache's Quotations and the Synoptic Gospels', *NTS* 5 (1958–59), pp. 12–39; B. Layton, 'The Sources, Date and Transmission of Didache 1.3b–2.1', *HTR* 61 (1968), pp. 343–83; W. Rordorf, 'Le problème de la transmission textuelle de Didaché 1.3b–2.1', in *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (TU, 125; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1981), now in *Liturgie, foi et vie des premiers chrétiens* (Etudes patristiques [Théol. hist. 45]; Paris: Beauchesne, 2nd edn, 1988), pp. 139–53; and J. Draper, 'The Jesus Tradition in the Didache', in *Gospel Perspectives. V. The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985). Unfortunately K. Niederwimmer was not yet able to consider the papers of Jefford and Tuckett in his Commentary.

3. 'Problème de la transmission'.

4. Cf. his 'Introduction', pp. 38–39 and *passim*. His last word (p. 145, in the 'Summary of Conclusions') is extremely vague: 'Several other passages, including 1.3a–2.1, 6.2–3 and most of chap. 16 cannot be dated with accuracy, since they reflect concerns of the early church that continued into the second century and beyond'.

I have stressed that, in handling the problem of whether we can in *Did.* 1.3a–2.1 assume knowledge of one or two of the Synoptic Gospels in their final form, we may not make our point of departure previous conclusions reached through other criteria; rather we must start from the most precise possible comparison of the texts. The procedure can operate only on the basis enunciated by Tuckett (p. 217) building on H. Köster:

despite the uncertainty inherent in the synoptic analysis, the method of trying to identify redactional elements in the gospels, and then comparing these with the text of the *Didache*, remains the best way of determining whether this section of the *Didache* presupposes the finished gospels or not.

I continue my verse-by-verse investigation, using as a basis the Synoptic comparisons given by Tuckett, and also his commentary. Jefford will be mentioned where he has something special to offer.

Didache 1.3a

Let us begin with Jefford's discussion. He finds here, as in four other places (which will be discussed later) 'evidence of a Matthean Tradition' (pp. 43-46). His criterion is the combination of εὐλογέω, προσεύχομαι and νηστεύω. He says (p. 44): 'From the outset, the triad of praise, prayer and fasting that opens the H version [this is the siglum of the single complete remaining Greek MS of the *Didache*] of these materials immediately recalls the similar triad of almsgiving, prayer and fasting (= the Three Rules) that appears in Matt. 6:2-6, 16-18'.¹ Although Jefford subsequently also notes (p. 46) that *Did.* 1.3b-4 is connected with Mt. 5.38-48, that is, the passage immediately preceding Mt. 6.1-18, I cannot avoid the impression that this 'evidence' is a castle in the air, since in *Did.* 1.3b it is a question not of the triad *almsgiving*, prayer and fasting, but the triad *blessing*, prayer and fasting. In my opinion this gives a wholly different context.²

1. It should be mentioned that in this connection Jefford refers (in footnote 54) to B. Gerhardsson, 'Geistiger Opferdienst nach Matth. 6, 1-6 16-21', in *Neues Testament und Geschichte: Festschrift O. Cullmann zum 70. Geburtstag* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), pp. 69-77.

2. Cf. my 'Problème de la transmission', pp. 501-502. Tuckett ('Synoptic Tradition', p. 219 n. 99) quotes me, but misunderstands when he attributes (in the

Tuckett (p. 218) is much more careful and exact here. He does not pass over the difficulties, as one little example shows:

It is not certain whether Luke's fourfold form, or Matthew's twofold form, most accurately represents the Q version of the command to love one's enemies. . . . The strongest argument for the activity of LkR concerns the use of *καλῶς ποεῖτε*. . . . But it is just this phrase of Lk. 6,27f. which does *not* have a parallel in Did. 1,3. . . . Thus the longer form of the command to love one's enemies in the Didache can probably not tell us very much in the present discussion.

Tuckett expresses himself with more certainty in another case (pp. 219-20):

One small feature which may be more significant in this section is the use of *διώκω* which agrees with Matt 5, 44b against Lk 6, 28b. Many would argue that *διώκω* in Matt 5 is due to MattR. . . . One could argue that the word is too general to carry much weight here; but against this is the fact that the motif of 'persecution' is not one that really dominates this, or any, section of the Didache. It is therefore unlikely to have been added by the Didachist himself. This small agreement between the Didache and Matthew may thus be an instance where the Didache presupposes MattR and hence Matthew's finished gospel.

In fact the verb *διώκω* (as opposed to *ἐπηρεύζω* in Lk. 6.28) can scarcely carry the weight given it by Tuckett; on the contrary, I believe precisely that the specifically *Didache* expression 'fast for those who persecute you' presupposes a concrete background of persecution from the Jewish side, which indeed was no less a reality for the Matthaean community.

Didache 1.3b

The first thing that strikes one is the divergence between *ἔθνη/ἔθνικοί* (*Did./Mt.*) and *ἁμαρτωλοί* (Lk.). On the whole exegetes give preference to the Matthaean version. The almost identical formulation of the *Didache* is a further argument in its favour. It must be remembered that the *Didache* is a document directed towards non-Jewish Christians; therefore the manner of speaking in *Did.* 1.3b is rather awkward, and presumably goes back to Jewish-Christian tradition.¹ In

main text) *Did.* 1.3b to a 'later development of the tradition', which is precisely what I wanted to call into question.

1. Tuckett ('Synoptic Tradition', pp. 222-23) denies this argument its true

my article¹ I attempted to draw the following conclusion from the choice of words in *Didache*/Matthew:

The fact that the text of the *Didache* is close to that of Matthew, without actually reproducing it, seems to me highly significant. This means that the textual tradition of the *Didache* here sinks its roots into a milieu similar to the Gospel of Matthew without, nevertheless, directly depending upon it.

Incidentally, this sentence of mine was not accepted by Tuckett.²

The second problem of this verse concerns the introductory rhetorical question ποία γὰρ χάρις; this occurs almost identically three times in Lk. 6.32-34. Tuckett (pp. 223-24) among others considers that it betrays the work of LkR. He appeals especially to an article of W.C. van Unnik,³ in which this veteran scholar, whose loss we all regret, draws attention to the fact that the Gospel of Luke is here alluding to the ancient 'reciprocity ethic', in order to criticize it. In Tuckett's opinion the *Didache* took over the rhetorical question itself, but omitted the framework in order to replace it with the conclusion οὐχ ἔξετε ἐχθρόν, thereby falsifying the original intention: 'This is now precisely the ethos of the reciprocity ethic which Luke's language was designed to oppose: love others and they will love you back'; and in conclusion: 'The fact remains that the author of this section of the *Didache* seems to presuppose Luke's version here in a way that goes beyond simply using the word χάρις—he takes over the Lukan rhetorical question, but fails to see its significance and hence betrays the secondary nature of his own text'.

weight when he says that the tension exists only with the second title of the *Didache*. In fact the whole work shows that it is directed to non-Jewish Christians (cf., e.g., *Did.* 2.2). Jefford (pp. 46-47) goes in the same direction as Tuckett, but with an *a priori* judgment: 'If the interpolation of 1, 3b-2 is among the latest layers of the *Didache*, which it most probably is, one would not expect the interpolator to have reverted back to a Jewish sympathy'.

1. 'Problème de la transmission', p. 503.

2. He writes ('Synoptic Tradition', p. 222 n. 108): 'It is dubious whether one can place too much weight on the difference between ἔθνη and ἔθνικοί. The two are almost synonymous and one must remember that the *Didache* is not a scribe's copy of the text of the gospels.' He then appeals to Layton ('Sources', p. 355) to say: 'In fact it is Matthew's ἔθνικοί which is unusual and invites a change to ἔθνη'.

3. 'Die Motivierung der Feindesliebe in Lukas VI 32-35', *NovT* 8 (1966), pp. 288-300.

This is a penetrating observation. At this point of my paper I cannot yet give a comprehensive reply; I would like to say only this much: it is correct that there is here an allusion to the 'reciprocity ethic'. The *Didache* confirms exactly this state of affairs in that it sets as introduction and heading of the whole passage 1.3-5 the Golden Rule, which may be considered to be the perfect expression of this 'reciprocity ethic'. However I do think that Tuckett somewhat misses the exact point when he maintains that the *Didache* abandons any criticism of this 'reciprocity ethic' by drawing the conclusion that 'you will have no enemy'. If I understand the matter rightly, the *Didache* does indeed make a critique but one slightly differently angled. The Gentiles wrongly limit the validity of the Golden Rule to situations which are in any case satisfactory: love evokes love in return. But, in a situation which is troubled or hostile, my enemy's conduct should not give me any pretext to give him a dose of his own medicine, namely hate; rather should I seize the initiative by loving him, so that he also may learn to love me. Presumably that is why the Golden Rule is given in *Did.* 1.2 in its negative version: 'Whatever you do not wish to be done to you [in concrete terms, for example, that you should be hated], you yourself should not do to another [in concrete terms, hate another person, so that that person may learn to love you]'.

If this is correct then the question remains open for this verse too, whether the *Didache* here shows itself to be secondary to the Lukan version, or whether its view of things at least *could* be considered wholly independent.

Didache 1.4a

The *Didache* is here far closer to the Matthaean than to the Lukan version of the saying (compare δὲ ῥάπισμα or ῥαπίζει τῷ τύπτοντι, δεξιάν [lacking in Luke], στρέψον as opposed to πάρεχε). Tuckett (p. 225) naturally raises the question whether these three specific variants are to be traced to the Matthaean redaction. But, like most exegetes, he assumes that in comparison to the Lukan version they are more original: 'Thus the *Didache* does not have any clear links with MattR'.

Two problems must still be carefully considered. The first is precisely the difference between δὲ ῥάπισμα (*Did.*) and ῥαπίζω

(Mt.). I had already noted, as on *Did.* 1.3c:¹ 'The text of the Didache is, then, close to the version of Matthew, though without depending on it'. Tuckett replies that this proves nothing. After all, 'the Didachist is capable of writing poor Greek' and 'one must allow for a greater element of freedom on the part of the Didachist in using his sources than in the case of a scribe seeking to copy a manuscript'.

It is all the more gratifying that Tuckett (p. 226) agrees with me about the second problem: καὶ ἔση τέλειος, in comparison with Mt. 5.48, could indeed be considered Matthean redaction, which is picked up again by the Didachist also in another passage. But since the same idea appears in *Did.* 6.2, it is clear 'that this language of "perfectio" is of some importance for the Didachist. The exhortation here could be due to independent redaction by the Didachist.'

Didache 1.4b

This verse has no parallel in Luke. Is it added by Matthew or removed by Luke? Tuckett explains (p. 227):

The situation presupposed here is probably that of Roman troops forcing service from native Jews; but whether this already reflects the situation of the Q 'community', or the later Matthean community, or a stage of the tradition in between, is very hard to say without arguing in a circle.

Jefford (p. 47) also finds a decision difficult, but then says in footnote 67: 'It seems reasonable to agree with Kilpatrick here (*The Origins of the Gospel according to St Matthew*, 1946, 20) that the Matthean redactor has added this element to the Q materials from a separate M source'.

Didache 1.4c

Here it has always been remarked that Mt. 5.40 and Lk. 6.29 presuppose two different situations: while Matthew has trade in mind, Luke is alluding to theft: this is indicated not only by the verb αἵρω (which recurs in the following verse) but also through the order ἱμάτιον—χιτῶν. Which version is more original? Tuckett (p. 227) shrugs his shoulders: 'Again the argument about originality can go (and has gone) either way'. The *Didache* version is unmistakably closer to the Lukan, without following it. There is an impression that in the

1. 'Problème de la transmission', p. 504.

Didache the sequence of 1.4c-5 is more logically built up than in Luke: the series on (involuntary) taking away is closed (v. 4d), before the transition occurs to (voluntary) almsgiving.¹ I will return to this later.

Didache 1. 4d-5a

This is an extremely important passage for Tuckett's investigation (pp. 228-230). First he discusses the exact relationship of the meaning of *παντί* and *δίδου* in *Did.* 1.5a and Lk. 6.30a. Since both of these seem to stem from the Lukan redaction, one could conclude that the *Didache* is dependent on that redaction. But Tuckett interposes (p. 228),

one cannot build too much on this here: Luke's aim is to generalize the idea of giving, but the *Didache* has exactly the same idea and hence the *παντί* and the present imperative *δίδου* could just as easily be seen as independent redaction of the tradition by the *Didachist*.

In what follows (pp. 228-29), Tuckett nevertheless opts very definitely for the originality of the Matthaean over the Lukan version. To do full justice to the nuances of his argument I will quote him in full, even though it is somewhat lengthy:

More significant in the present context is the opening sentence here, where the *Didache* agrees with Luke against Matthew in referring to someone who takes, rather than someone who wants to borrow; there is also agreement between the *Didache* and Luke in using *ἀπαίτει* in the final part. Now it is almost certain that Matthew's reference to 'borrowing' represents the Q version here: Luke uses the same (rather rare) verb in vv. 34, 35 and this seems to constitute a reminiscence of the earlier saying. Luke is above all here interested in the idea of generous giving, and he appears to save up the borrowing reference to develop it considerably in v. 34f. Further, it is of considerable importance to Luke to stress the idea that one should expect nothing in return. (This is, of course, part of his critique of the reciprocity ethic.) Hence Luke's 'lending' to a borrower is virtually equivalent to a gift.

However, the 'not expecting anything back' idea dominates Luke's version here; thus the Lukan *ἀπαίτει* in v. 30 is much more likely to be redactional than Matthew's *ἀποστραφῆς*. In v. 30 Luke appears to have continued the robbery idea from v. 29, and saved the reference to the

1. 'Problème de la transmission', p. 506.

'borrower' for later; but he starts to introduce the idea of not asking for anything in return here.

The result is that Luke's version is rather uneven. For the Lukan text exhorts someone who has just been robbed not to demand his property back. But whatever means one might employ to recover stolen goods, simply demanding is unlikely to have any effect at all.

I must admit that I have some difficulty in following this argument. Above all Tuckett seems to me to read the text of Luke too much from the perspective of the parallel passage in the *Didache*, for instance as though v. 30b preceded v. 30a. But if in fact 'Give to everyone who asks you' introduces the new verse, then we are no longer in the situation of a 'robbery'; in this case the subsequent αἶρω in v. 30b has obviously a much weakened character. Because of this it is not easy to follow Tuckett's next observation (p. 229): 'It may be that it is precisely this incongruity in the Lukan text which is reflected in the notorious little clause οὐδὲ γὰρ δύνασαι, which is appended at this point in the *Didache*'.

I grant that this clause of the *Didache* brings difficulties with it, on which I have also given my opinion.¹ But it is too easy a 'solution' of the problem to assume with Tuckett that the Didachist had the text of Luke before him, and finding that his text was here 'uneven' simply added his despairing sigh at the end. In this case the first thing to be explained would be why he reversed the order of v. 30 a and b as he found it in Luke. Next it would have to be explained why he himself inserted in his text the much weaker λαμβάνω (by contrast to Luke's αἶρω), which could have saved him from having to add the οὐδὲ γὰρ δύνασαι as a despairing sigh. Some questions remain open. In any case I cannot accept the judgment of Tuckett which next follows (p. 230): 'The net result of the discussion of this section is that the *Didache* here appears to presuppose Luke's redactional work and hence Luke's finished gospel'.

I cannot, however, simply leave the matter there, putting a question-mark to Tuckett's (and Jefford's) explanations to indicate that they have not succeeded in proving what they set out to prove. A fresh examination of the texts by a Synoptic comparison will presumably yield nothing new. But I would like to devote a positive section to

1. 'Problème de la transmission', p. 505.

expounding my own, partly newly-won, view of the matter. I divide it into three points.

1. For the first point I can take as my point of departure the remark of Jefford about *Did.* 1.1-2 which I have already praised. I quote again a concluding remark of Jefford (p. 37) which I have already quoted:

This notation concerning the 'double love commandment' and the Golden Rule as the summation of 'the law and the prophets' [Jefford is referring to Mt. 7.12b and 22.40] appears only here in the Gospels, and thus may imply that the Matthean redactor was familiar with a tradition in which the 'double love commandment' and the Golden Rule were recognized as two elements of a single *inclusio* concerning the parameters of the OT Law. For our purposes, it is *not* significant that the phrase was used as an indicator of the summation of the Law, since this was a common practice in early Jewish circles. It *is* significant that the Matthean redactor uses this phrase to underscore two sayings that come from different OT sources, which the Didachist also considered to be the essence of the 'Way of Life', since this lends some support for the position that the Didachist and the Matthean redactor are dependent upon a common tradition of scriptural interpretation.

I am in full agreement with Jefford and would therefore now like to put a further question. It is not only the case that Matthew and the *Didache* put together the double love commandment and the Golden Rule as summary of the OT law; they also do it in the same *mnemotechnical form*: the first—the second command (Mt. 22.38-39; cf. Mk 12.29, 31); firstly—secondly (*Did.* 1.2). In Matthew this mnemotechnique is somewhat overdone (it only gives the heading, the agenda: the first/the second commandment/on these depend the law and the prophets) and is left hanging in the air. But in the *Didache* this agenda is carried out: in *Didache* 2ff. the law (primarily the Ten Commandments) and the prophets (primarily the Wisdom Literature) are copiously quoted, in order to show that there was good reason to put the mnemotechnical formula at the beginning.

Let me put it this way: in the *Didache* we have before our eyes what in Matthew (and partly in Mark) was only *presupposed*. One cannot claim that the Didachist read the relevant passages in Matthew and then had the brilliant idea of developing from it a whole teaching programme. The reverse is the case: the passages in Matthew make sense fully only in the knowledge that they serve as the résumé of an agenda

which we find fully worked out in the *Didache*.

A further argument backs this up. It is well known that the whole doctrine of the Two Ways presents itself in the *Didache* as a *catechetical* programme of instruction (cf. *Did.* 7.1). This catechetical programme of instruction is widespread in the early Christian sources. With striking frequency it is attached to the double command of love and to the Golden Rule, and is then worked out through the second tablet of the Ten Commandments.¹ In my opinion it is unthinkable that this catechetical programme was derived solely and simply from the *Didache* and thence spread so widely in the pre-Constantinian Church, since it is commonly accepted that the *Didache* comes from a marginal community, presumably settled in Syria. It could never have exercised such an influence. We must presuppose that the *Didache* itself is dependent on a tradition of teaching which was connected to the mainstream of Christian tradition. It is easily imaginable that the *Didache* is somehow related to the tradition of Matthew's community, just as Jefford attempts to show.²

2. Now for the material in the 'Evangelical Section' of the *Didache* (1.3bff.). Above all I should like to draw attention to the fact that this material is presented both in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and in the *Didache*, each from a particular point of view. Without being a specialist in these matters I will attempt to outline these points of view:

a. In the Sermon on the Mount Matthew presents his material in the form of antitheses (5.21-48). Again it is a question of 'the law and the prophets' (5.17). The antithetical form is the work of the evangelist. But I would like to draw attention to the fact that, as far as *content* is concerned, similar structural elements appear in the *Didache*, though not within the Evangelical Section. In Matthew and in the *Didache* (2.2-3), the Ten Commandments are adduced primarily as examples. Incidentally it is striking that they appear in the same order in Matthew and in the *Didache*: prohibition of killing and of divorce (so

1. I cannot go deeper into this matter here; I refer to my contribution to the Bo Reicke Festschrift, 'Beobachtungen zum Gebrauch des Dekalogs in der vorkonstantinischen Kirche', in *The New Testament Age*, II (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), pp. 431-42.

2. In the third part of his book (pp. 93ff.). This merits a good deal of comment, some of it critical. But in any case Jefford's viewpoint is stimulating.

the order of the Hebrew Bible, not of the LXX), and this is particularly remarkably followed by the prohibition of oaths, which is otherwise unparalleled. Then in *Did.* 3.1-6 in addition the Ten Commandments are laid out in the same explanatory way as in the Matthaean antitheses (bad intention leads to wicked action). And *Did.* 3.7 uses the same quotation of Ps. 36.11, which forms one of the Beatitudes in Mt. 5.5. So we see that, besides the material of the Evangelical Section of the *Didache* (1.3bff.), which occurs in Mt. 5.43-48, and what we have said about the schema of the Two Ways and about the Golden Rule, the whole shape of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount runs largely parallel to the *Didache*, even though it is presented largely differently in accordance with Matthew's own point of view.¹

b. Luke's point of view is less easy to define. I would simply like to note what strikes me in comparison to the *Didache*. Luke puts the material of the Evangelical Section of the *Didache* immediately after the Beatitudes and the Woes, right at the beginning of his Sermon on the Plain (6.27-36.). The Golden Rule appears *here* (6.31), just as it does in the *Didache*! So it can be no accident that in the *Didache* the material of the Evangelical Section is understood as an explanation of the Golden Rule which stands at its head. The Didachist wants, as I have already explained, to use *this* method of protesting against the 'reciprocity ethic'; in this he finds himself working on the same lines as Luke.

c. In the *Didache* the material of the Evangelical Section is divided up and explained according to a catechetical structure, as I attempted to show in a previous article.² Here I can do no more than briefly recapitulate what I said there. The passage is composed of two units, which had already been joined together before the Didachist came to use them. *Did.* 1.3-4 speaks of the attitude of a Christian to those who wish him ill, with regard to whom he has no freedom of movement. *Did.* 1.5-6 speaks of the attitude of a Christian to those who wish to take advantage of him, and here he has the possibility of thrusting

1. Several exegetes, especially G. Bornkamm and H.-D. Betz, have drawn attention to this; it would be possible to link together the parts of the two works which deal with almsgiving, prayer and fasting. But this would lead us too far astray.

2. Cf. 'Problème de la transmission'.

their attempts aside. Each unit is subdivided and provided with explanatory additions. I will not now enter upon these additional commentaries. I wish to draw attention only to v. 4a, which introduces the consequence of hostility expressed in unacceptable and painful physical violence, and to the progressively more cautious reflections on almsgiving (1.5d-6) which must reflect unpleasant experiences in this connection.

3. It is now tempting to ask which point of view is the original one. I do not know whether this question has any mileage in it. Presumably the question has no conclusive answer. But I would like to hold fast to the conclusions which seem to me to follow from the previous considerations, namely that the *Didache* certainly did not put together its material from the completed versions of the Synoptic Gospels, more exactly from Matthew and Luke. I pass over the detailed questions which remain open if one accepts the negative answer. Of this I have already spoken above. I pose now only the basic, and for me in the last analysis the decisive question: is it conceivable that the Didachist culls the double command of love from a passage in Matthew (there is no question of it being Luke), namely Mt. 22.36-40, which he then quotes in a remarkably different form? Furthermore does he draw the Golden Rule from Mt. 7.12, but express it in the otherwise normal negative form, and subsequently add the Synoptic material about love of enemies and retribution in a form and order different from those both of Matthew and of Luke?

It seems to me that to put this question is to provide an answer to it. There could be only one other alternative, to speak of a later *harmony* of the Gospels used in the *Didache*.¹ But one simple reason seems to me to exclude this. A harmony of the Gospels presupposes that the basic text has canonical authority. But with a canonical text it is impossible to chop and change as the *Didache* does; it is not permissible to complete it by glosses and added commentaries.

Therefore in my opinion it is possible only to postulate that in this passage of the doctrine of the Two Ways the *Didache* has preserved a Jesus tradition independently of the Synoptic Gospels. I forbear to investigate how far this Jesus tradition is connected with the so-called sayings-source Q for two reasons:

1. This has already been suggested, e.g., by H. Köster.

1. The question of the sayings-source Q is so controversial among New Testament scholars that I do not intend to burn my fingers on this hot potato.
2. It seems to me out of the question in this case to succeed in reconstructing the postulated original behind the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and then comparing it to the *Didache*. If anyone is determined to make this attempt, I wish him luck!

For the sake of completeness I may perhaps also note that K. Niederwimmer comes to the same result as myself in his Commentary¹ when he writes: 'For the whole pericope [*Did.* 1.4b, 5a] it is again tempting to assume that we have before us an oral tradition parallel to the Synoptic tradition, or (better) the presumption of the use of the same apocryphal collection of sayings which we assumed already for 1.3bff.'

Incidentally Niederwimmer was not yet aware of the studies of Jefford and Tuckett.

2. *Didache* 16

The second homogeneous passage which demands comparison with the Synoptic tradition is the final apocalyptic chapter of the *Didache*.² Practically all commentators have chronological and logical difficulties in placing this chapter. Jefford provides an example of the shoulder-shrugging which occurs in this connection (p. 90): 'In the final analysis, the situation of the chapter with respect to its sources and with respect to the historical framework of the development of the *Didache* must remain without certain answers'.

In concrete terms the problem is that the chapter certainly belongs to the final redaction of the *Didache*; in this I concur. But at the same time it reaches back to an unmistakeably Jewish tradition which was precisely connected to the doctrine of the Two Ways of which we have already spoken. A comparison with the tradition of the Synoptic Gospels will therefore contribute greatly to a closer definition of its chronological position. At this point, however, I would like to express a statement of principle which must precede the detailed comparison.

In order to make clear what I mean, I can appeal to Jefford's study,

1. *Die Didache*, p.108.
2. But also see the Addendum below.

although he reaches a contrary result, since in this matter he makes a decisive mistake. Already the formulation of the title of his study points in the wrong direction: 'The Sayings of Jesus in the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles'. The 'Sayings of Jesus' are for Jefford not restricted to those sayings which we find also in the Synoptic Gospels, but obviously include the unmistakably Jewish tradition of the doctrine of the Two Ways taken up in the early chapters of the *Didache*. The following sentence makes this clear (Jefford, p. 144): 'The original collection of sayings [*Did.* 1-5] did not reflect the theological concerns of the later church...but instead, they probably were envisioned as prophetic interpretations by *Jesus* [my italics] that were offered upon the Jewish tradition'.

I can explain this contention of Jefford's only if he takes the subtitle of the *Didache*, Διδαχὴ κυρίου διὰ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, as genuine. By this title (and there is now a firm conviction that it is certainly not original¹) a *later* viewpoint is expressed that puts the whole of the *Didache*-material under the authority of Jesus and the twelve (!) apostles, in order to give it more weight. But in the first five chapters of the *Didache* no word is spoken of the Lord, nor is there any appeal to this authority.

I have placed such emphasis on this matter because it seems to me especially important to be aware of it in connection with ch. 16. For the decisive difference between the *Didache* and the Synoptic Gospels is that the Gospels place the apocalyptic teaching on Jesus' lips, while the *Didache* forgoes this support. Since the majority of the material of the apocalyptic teaching is unmistakably of Jewish origin, the Synoptic Gospels seem to have gone a step further than the *Didache* on this point towards 'Christianization'. In any case I find it very difficult to assume that the Didachist, if he had the completed text of the Synoptic Gospels before him, would have dared to take this doctrine, so to speak, out of Jesus' mouth again and present it as anonymous instruction. It is much easier to assume that in the Didachist's source the connection of this teaching with Jesus had not yet been made. This introduction must, as we have said, precede the detailed investigation.²

1. See now, e.g., Niederwimmer, *Die Didache*, pp. 81ff.

2. Professor A. Milavec (Cincinnati, USA), who is working on a new commentary on the *Didache*, and for this purpose has recently been staying for some weeks in Neuchâtel, has convinced me by his independent research on *Didache* 16 that the

In the discussion of the single verses I again follow Tuckett's investigation (pp. 200ff.). For vv. 6-8 the work of Kloppenborg will also be pressed into service.¹

Tuckett (pp. 200-201) expresses the thrust of his investigation in the following sentences:

It is said that Did. 16 only shows links with material peculiar to Matt 24 in the synoptic tradition: the Didache does not have any links with material from Matt 24 which Matthew has derived from Mark. Hence, it is argued, the Didache is more likely to be dependent on the source(s) which lie behind Matt 24 and which were available to Matthew alone; if the Didache were dependent on Matthew, one would expect some of Matthew's Markan material to be reflected as evidence of Did. 16 itself. For the text of Did. 16 contains possible allusions to synoptic material in four verses common to Matthew and Mark (and which Matthew presumably derived from Mark).

Tuckett then goes on to investigate these passages.

Didache 16.4b-d

Tuckett (p. 201) first compares the parallels between Mk 13.22 // Mt. 24.24; Mk 13.19 // Mt. 24.21 and *Did.* 16.4 and then pronounces:

apocalypse contained in our text has a thoroughly Jewish character. This supports the view that it cannot simultaneously be dependent on the Synoptic apocalypses which have already been worked over in a Christian sense. The individual passages are (and Professor Milavec will give the arguments in his publication):

Did. 16.5: κατάθεμα is an allusion not to the crucified Jesus but to the πρόωσις τῆς δοκιμασίας.

Did. 16.6: ἐκπέτασις is not a designation of the Cross, but an allusion to the 'standard' (σ) at which the elect will gather, according to the prophetic promises, at the end.

Did. 16.7: it is a question of the resurrection not of all the dead, but only of the righteous, as in the Mishnah.

Did. 16.8: κύριος designates God himself, by contrast to Dan. 7.12, where it means the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.

1. J.S. Kloppenborg, 'Didache 16, 6-8 and Special Matthean Tradition', ZNW 70 (1979), pp. 54-67, with which Niederwimmer (*Die Didache*, pp. 255-26) also seems to agree. For earlier literature see the works mentioned on p. 400 n. 2, and in addition especially E. Bammel, 'Schema und Vorlage von *Didache* 16', TU 79 (1961), pp. 253-62, and recently, H.R. Seelinger, *Erwägungen zu Hintergrund und Zweck des apokalyptischen Schlusskapitels der Didache* (Studia Patristica, 21; Leuven: Peeters, 1989), pp. 185-92.

It can be argued, of course, that these parallels are not very significant. Both the *Didache* and the synoptists could be reflecting standard eschatological motifs and using OT language. However, it is clear that the verbal links between Did. 16 and Matthew 24 are *not* confined to material peculiar to Matthew.

He then (pp. 201-202) criticizes Köster for granting this, but adding the precision that the material which is not specifically Matthaean is drawn not from Mark but from Mark's source.¹ This point is not satisfactorily made by Tuckett.

I would, above all, like to add that Tuckett makes too light of the *differences* between the Synoptic tradition and the *Didache*. As in other places, he here (p. 201 n. 19) falls back on the argument that it is important not to confuse quotation and reminiscence or allusion. Nevertheless, the extremely striking variants in the text of the *Didache* (κοσμοπλανής is the subject, v. 4c is inserted, and also ποιήσει ἄθέμιτα) cannot be done away with in this manner without making a mockery of all serious comparison. Therefore with the best will in the world I cannot see in this verse more than that 'Both the *Didache* and the synoptists could be reflecting standard eschatological motifs and using OT language'.

Didache 16.5c

Since Tuckett (pp. 202-203) himself grants that we here approach ideas expressed in Dan. 12.12 (Theod) and 4 Esd. 6.25, and that Mk 13.13 is presumably pre-Markan, this verse contributes nothing to his thesis. His rather weak final sentence makes this clear: 'But whatever its origin, it is clear that Did. 16.5 provides another instance where the *Didache* shows verbal links with material which Matthew shares with Mark'.

Didache 16.8

This is the crux of Tuckett's argument (pp. 23ff.). In my opinion, however, it is the weakest link in his chain of evidence. Against Glover and Kloppenborg he puts forward the argument that Mt. 24.30b is dependent on Mk 13.26, but that the passage was subsequently assimilated to the LXX-language of Dan. 7.13. He finds

1. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, p. 182. That this leads to the use of self-contradictory criteria, as Tuckett claims, is not true.

this a simpler solution than the assumption that both Matthew and Mark (and of course Lk. 21.27!) depend on Dan. 7.13 LXX, in which case Matthew diverges least from the language of the LXX. *Did.* 16.8 is closest to Mt. 24.30b, but again shows a striking free variation at the beginning: τότε ὄψεται ὁ κόσμος τὸν κύριον.¹

I do not see that this verse contains more than a shared use of the idea in Dan. 7.13 by Matthew, Mark, Luke and *Didache*; in this case it would be difficult to determine more precisely the further inter-relationships between the four Christian texts. It should be noted that Kloppenborg (p. 63) comes to exactly the opposite conclusion: 'Far from suggesting that *Did.* 16, 8 depends upon Matt 24, 30, the evidence indicates that *Did.* 16, 8 represents an independent tradition under whose influence Matthew altered his Marcan source, namely by substituting ἐπὶ for ἐν and adding τοῦ οὐρανοῦ!'

Didache 16.3-5

These verses (or, more exactly, 16.3, 4a, 5) of the *Didache-Apocalypse* have parallels *only* in Matthew, and especially in Mt. 24.10-12. Here I can quote Tuckett's conclusions (pp. 205-206):

16,3 πληθυνθήσονται οἱ ψευδοπροφῆται uses similar language to Matt 24, 11f. (ψευδοπροφῆται in v. 11; πληθυνθῆναι in v. 12); 'sheep becoming wolves' in *Did.* 16, 3 uses imagery similar to that of Matt 7, 15; 'ἀγάπη turning to μῖσος' reflects Matt 24, 10, 12 (μισήσουσιν in v. 10, ἀγάπη in v. 12); ἀνομία increasing (*Did.* 16, 4) is similar to Matt 24, 11 (ἀνομία multiplying); and διώξουσιν in *Did.* 16, 4 links with διώκουσιν in the very closely related context of Matt 10, 23. Finally σκανδαλισθήσονται πολλοί of *Did.* 16, 5 recalls the identical words in Matt 24, 10.

1. If a comparison between Mt. 25.31 and *Did.* 16.7 enters into the discussion (and unfortunately Tuckett neglects this), then Kloppenborg's judgment is most persuasive: 'There can be no doubt concerning the independence of *Did.* 16.7 from Matthew. The *Didache* agrees with the LXX against Matthew in its use of ἵξει instead of ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ, κύριος instead of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου and ἄγιοι instead of ἄγγελοι. Matthew's addition of ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ as well as the reference to the Son of Man sitting upon the throne of glory is without parallel in *Did.* 16.7. Put briefly, the *Didache* disagrees with Matthew where Matthew changes the wording of Zechariah. It would be absurd to suppose that the author of the *Didache-Apocalypse*, in quoting Mt. 25.31, arrived at a formulation which agreed with the LXX against Matthew in at least three different respects.'

It is only Tuckett's method which seems to me problematical. He explains:

Methodologically, the problem should perhaps be one of synoptic study before one considers the *Didache* itself. Within Matthean scholarship there is widespread agreement that these verses are due to MattR. If this is the case, then it would appear to provide clear evidence of the *Didache*'s presupposition of Matthew's redactional activity and hence of Matthew's gospel. . . .

and he must then add, 'This conclusion has however been disputed from the side of *Didachean* scholarship'.

Of course! For if any statement at all is to be made about use of sources in Mt. 24.10-12, it is possible only in view of the parallels in the *Didache*. H. Köster¹ makes precisely this analysis and comes to the conclusion (p. 184):

Did. 16 seems to prove that Matt 24, 10-12 is not a résumé of Mark 13, 9-13 (= Matt 10, 17-22) composed by Matt, but is an independent piece of Jewish apocalyptic tradition, added here by Matt as a substitute for the passage of Mark 13, 9-13 which he has already used in chapter 10. The same piece of Jewish tradition is used also in Did. 16. This explains without any difficulty why Did. 16 shows such contacts with Matthew's version of the synoptic apocalypse only in this passage. It cannot be accounted for simply as unintentional use of the same apocalyptic features, as is the case with all the other contacts between the special Matthean passages and Did. 16. It also explains why Did. 16, 3 gives the impression of being more original than Matt 24, 12. For a variant of Matt 24, 10-12 has been worked into the *Didache-Apocalypse* while still partly in more original form than it exists in Matt.

Tuckett's criticism (pp. 207-208) of Köster's method does not seem to me to hold water. He says first (p. 207):

The measure of verbal agreement between the *Didache* and Matthew cannot be used to determine whether that agreement is due to direct dependence of one on the other or to common dependence on a prior source. Common dependence on a prior source does not necessarily involve less close verbal agreement.

In this Tuckett refers only to *one* part of Köster's argument (p. 181); but elsewhere Köster writes as follows, presenting a far weightier argument: 'The precise reason why the assumption that Did. 16 is

1. *Synoptische Überlieferung*, pp. 177ff.

dependent on Matt seems to me no explanation at all is that it still remains unexplained why Did. considers only this one passage which was inserted by Matt into the synoptic apocalypse'.

But above all the continuation of Tuckett's criticism of Köster is, to me at least, unconvincing (pp. 207-208):

Second, and more important, the claim that Did. 16 itself may provide evidence that Matt 24, 10-12 is pre-Matthean is a case of *petitio principii* here. If the question is whether the Didache depends on Matthew's gospel or on a pre-Matthean source, one cannot use the evidence of the Didache itself to solve the source problem of Matthew's text. Köster's argument is thus dangerously circular.

I cannot see this. The only procedure possible for me is to ask the question whether Mt. 24.10-12 can be a self-sufficient Matthean composition based on Mk 13.9-13. In this the *Didache* parallel provides me with some assistance, because then I can investigate whether it seems to be dependent on Matthew 24. If it is *not* dependent, then this is a strong argument that Mt. 24.10-12, just like the *Didache*, draws on another apocalyptic source. This is the result reached by Köster, and apart from his criticism of method, which we have seen to be invalid, Tuckett has unfortunately made no answer to it.

Didache 16.6

Here I may leave Kloppenborg to speak (p. 65):

What is of the greatest significance for our contention that Did. 16, 6 is not dependent upon Matt 24, 30f. is the fact that Did. 16, 6 contains none of the elements which Matthew took over from Mark. Missing from 16,6 are those sections in which Matthew and Mark agree:

The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give out her light.
The stars will fall from heaven and the powers of heaven will be shaken,
He shall send out his angels, and they will gather up his elect from the four winds.

Did. 16, 6 corresponds to Matt 24, 30-31 *only* at those points at which Matthew turned from Mark to his special source, namely, in καὶ τότε φανήσεται τὸ σημεῖον, ἐν οὐρανῷ and μετὰ φωνῆς σάλπιγγος μεγάλης. It would be coincidental beyond belief that the Didache, using Matt 24, 30-31, would select only those elements which Matthew received from his special source and would reject all Marcan elements as reproduced by Matthew. Clearly, this makes dependence of the Didache upon Matthew extremely unlikely, but it does suggest that part of

Matthew's Sondergut was related to the tradition which eventually crystallized in the *Didache*-Apocalypse.

Tuckett (p. 208) alludes to this:¹ 'Several too point to the fact that *Did.* 16, 6 shows links only with material peculiar to Matthew. However, this is valid only if one confines attention to 16, 6; in 16, 8 the *Didache* does use material common to Matthew and Mark, as we have seen.' Implicitly Tuckett grants, or so it seems to me, that Kloppenborg's arguments about *Did.* 16.6 hit the mark. With regard to the problem of *Did.* 16.8 I have already made my position clear.

Didache 16.1

Something must still be said about this verse, because dependence on the Synoptic Gospels and especially on Lk. 12.35 has been postulated. Here I can follow Tuckett's conclusions (pp. 212-13):

The introductory $\gamma\eta\gamma\omicron\rho\epsilon\iota\tau\epsilon$ is parallel to Matt 24, 42 (MattR of Mark 13, 33 though the word occurs elsewhere in Mark). The saying about the lamps and loins is close to Lk 12, 35; and the saying about being 'ready for you do not know. . . ' is close to the ending of the parable of the thief at night in Matt 24, 44/Lk 12, 40 and the similar saying in Matt 24, 42/Mark 13, 35.

Certainty is not possible here. One must again bear in mind the fact that this is not an explicit quotation but a piece of exhortation perhaps using traditional language. Thus it is not unexpected that the uses of individual words may have shifted slightly from their synoptic contexts. There is nothing here that is so clearly MattR that it could only have derived from Matthew's gospel. More difficult is the question about the parallel between *Did.* 16, 1a and Lk 12, 35. Some have seen this as clear evidence of the *Didache*'s dependence on the gospel of Luke. Others have disagreed, arguing variously that Lk 12, 35 may be Q material so that the *Didache* is here dependent on Q rather than Luke, that the imagery is stereotyped (cf. 1 Pet 1, 13; Eph 6, 14), that the verbal agreement between the *Didache* and Luke is not close enough to imply direct dependence, or that the *Didache* nowhere else shows knowledge of Luke's gospel and hence is unlikely to do so here. It must be said that none of these arguments is absolutely convincing.

Tuckett himself is inclined to accept a dependence of the passage of *Did.* 16.1 on LkR, though he grants (p. 214): 'This last conclusion is

1. Also to Glover, 'Didache's Quotations', p. 24, and Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, pp. 184-85.

not certain in view of the very limited extent of the evidence available. Nevertheless it seems perhaps the least problematic solution.'

Presumably this opening of the *Didache-Apocalypse* belongs to a secondary redaction of the *Didache*. In this I agree with an observation of Kloppenborg:¹

This is undoubtedly the best solution: Did. 16, 1 with its consciousness of the delay of the Parousia or at least the uncertainty of its precise time, is in conflict with 16, 6-8 which precisely describes the succession of events and implies a certainty about the time of the Parousia.

Then the problem of the dependence of *Did.* 16.1 on the Synoptic tradition also must be seen in another light. Since the addition of ch. 16 belongs to the *final* redaction of the *Didache*, as we have said, a subsequent redactional link to the Synoptic material must not be excluded.

Precisely in this connection I would like to make a concluding comment which refers to *all* the passages considered in the doctrine of the Two Ways and in *Didache* 16. It seems to me a further decisive argument for the assumption that the Didachist did *not* have before him the completed Synoptic Gospels, and that he did not use them. This is the way in which the *Didache* quotes canonical sources. Precisely in ch. 16 we have an example of an Old Testament quotation: in v. 7, Zech. 14.5b LXX is quoted, and this quotation is introduced by ὡς ἐρρέθη. A similar case occurs in Did. 14.3 where the quotation of Mal. 1.11, 14 LXX is introduced thus: αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ῥηθεῖσα ὑπὸ κυρίου, in which 'kyrios' is here obviously God.

In ch. 15 (and this too, just like ch. 14, is in my opinion added subsequently) we have also a clear allusion to a *written Gospel* where it says, 'Direct your prayers and almsgiving and all your deeds as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord' (15.4).² Anyone who refers by means of such an expression to whole chapters of instruction must have a written source in mind to which he is referring. And

1. 'Didache 16, 6-8', p. 57 n. 12.

2. We come upon a parallel formula when *Did.* 8.2 presents the Lord's Prayer: 'As the Lord in his Gospel commanded, so should you pray'. Here the instruction chapter 'Prayer' is in view, as in *Did.* 15.4, rather than oral tradition; cf. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung*, pp. 203, 240. Note that in *Did.* 9.5 ('For in this connection the Lord said, "Do not give holy things to dogs" ') there is, and this is noteworthy, no mention of 'Gospel'.

presumably the same situation obtains in the immediately preceding verse where we read: 'Put one another right, not in anger but in peace, just as you have it in the Gospel' (15.3).

So we see that in the *later* parts of the *Didache*, which must be ascribed to a redactor, the canonical sources are very precisely characterized as such. If this is not the case for *any* of the other passages we have discussed, then I have only *one* explanation: no *written source* is being used, either Synoptic or otherwise canonical; rather the Didachist is using *oral* Jesus tradition known to him.

Therefore to the question posed in the title, 'Does the *Didache* contain Jesus tradition independently of the Synoptic Gospels?', in my view I can answer only 'Yes!'

Addendum

I would like to raise a further issue, hitherto unmentioned, since I had confined myself to investigation of the doctrine of the Two Ways and of the *Apocalypse* of *Didache* 16. But this further point comes to the fore from a comparison of the remaining passages in which *Didache* and Matthew are in parallel. R. Glover¹ noticed that several of these sayings common to the *Didache* and Matthew appear in different contexts, which would be inexplicable on the supposition of dependence of the *Didache* on Matthew.

Didache 1.5

and he will not come out of there [the prison] until he has paid the last penny.

In Mt. 5.26 (and probably in Lk. 12.59) this saying is connected with repayment of debts; in the *Didache* precisely the reverse is true: no debts should be incurred unless there is pressing need. Additionally, in the *Didache* the saying has a clear eschatological sense, just as in a well-attested branch of the patristic interpretation (Tertullian, *De orat.* 7; *De anima* 35, 58; Clem. Alex., *Quis dives salvetur* 40.5; Cyprian, *Ep.* 55, 20.3; *Sayings of Sextus*, 39). It could even be that the interpretation preserved in the *Didache* is more original, because it stands in direct connection with the idea of indebtedness, rather than in a transferred sense as it does in Matthew.

1. 'Didache's Quotations', p. 25.

Didache 8.1-2

Do not fast as the hypocrites do. . . do not pray as the hypocrites do.

Here it is clear that the term 'hypocrites' cannot denote the same people as in Mt. 6.5 and 6.16, for this would make nonsense. In my opinion by 'hypocrite' the *Didache* denotes certain Gentile Christians who, without regard for their new situation, wanted to adhere to Jewish traditions, namely the fasts of Monday and Thursday, and the thrice daily praying of the Shmoneh-Esre.

About the text of the Lord's Prayer we may say the following (cf. Köster, pp. 203ff.): over against the short version in Luke (five petitions), Matthew and the *Didache* seem to present the same form of the prayer. But this does not imply that the *Didache* depends on Matthew, since:

1. A comparison between the *Didache* and Matthew shows that, in three places at least, Matthew differs from the *Didache* ('in the heavens' instead of 'in heaven'; the past ἀφῆκαμεν instead of the present ἀφίεμεν; the petition to forgive 'debt' [*Didache*] instead of 'debts' [Matthew]).
2. The author of the *Didache* was citing the liturgical, that is, oral form of the prayer in use in his community; this is shown by the doxology at the end, which is absent from the oldest manuscripts of Matthew.

Didache 9.5

Do not give holy things to dogs.

In Mt. 7.6 this saying occurs without any clear context. In the *Didache* the situation is quite precise: only the baptized have the right to take part in the eucharistic meal. J.-P. Audet¹ pointed out that in this passage the *Didache* stands close to the original Jewish context of the temple-offering, which might not be given to dogs, that is, Gentiles.

Didache 11.7

All sins will be forgiven, but these sins [sins against the Holy Spirit] will not be forgiven.

1. *La Didaché*, p. 173.

H. Köster (p. 215) pointed out that the context in the *Didache*—by contrast to Mk 3.28-29 // Mt. 12.31 and Q (Mt. 12.32 // Lk. 12.10)—is close to the rabbinic background of this saying, according to which the sin against the Holy Spirit is considered to be the sin against prophetic inspiration.

SOME CONSEQUENCES OF BIRGER GERHARDSSON'S ACCOUNT OF THE ORIGINS OF THE GOSPEL TRADITION

Ben F. Meyer

Consulted on finding promising topics for a conference on Birger Gerhardsson's account of Gospel origins, I proposed that someone pose the question: what changes in early Christian studies would be imposed if Gerhardsson's account were shown to be true? A few weeks later I was invited to deal with this question myself.

Obviously, my proposal supposed that Gerhardsson's account of the origins of the Gospel tradition¹ was irreducible to a merely isolated technical question. It dealt with a fundamental issue, the resolution of which would have repercussions throughout New Testament and early Christian studies. The ultimate reason for the pivotal character of the issue may be held in abeyance for the moment.

1. *Preliminary Comment on Form Criticism*

This much, however, can be said from the start. Classical New Testament form criticism supposed a primitive Christian state of affairs that was open to any imaginable account of the origins of primitive Christianity. Or, rather, it was open to many imaginable accounts, but not to that suggested by the endings of the Gospels, by the Lukan prologue, and by the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. If such texts were taken at anything like face value, the controlling suppositions of classical New Testament form criticism would have to be adjudged radically defective.

1. Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Lund: Gleerup, 1961; 2nd edn, 1964); *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964); *The Origins of the Gospel Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1979); *The Gospel Tradition* (Lund: Gleerup, 1986).

Form criticism proposed a purely formal classification of Gospel materials to be followed by the identification of the diverse communitarian functions that these materials had been shaped to serve. The brighter post-Bultmannians quite clearly understood that form criticism conceived along these lines was not directly relevant to judgments of historicity on the material.¹ Others, however, failing to take account of this sober, if rudimentary, observation, made form criticism a kind of banner or catchword for historical scepticism respecting the Gospel materials.

Now, I do not intend to spend much time considering classical New Testament form criticism. It is clear that, if Gerhardsson's account of the origins of the Gospel tradition is right, form criticism will be more or less severely restricted to formal issues, such as exact classification of forms and exact descriptive retrieval of their stereotypic components. Historical judgments, in particular, will be made on bases other than form-critical analysis.

2. Impact on Historical-Jesus Research

This accordingly brings me to my first topic: if Gerhardsson's account of the origins of the Synoptic tradition is true, much of the discussion of historical criteriology over the past two generations has been misplaced or defective. For example, Ernst Käsemann's famous principle, that we have 'somewhat firm ground under our feet' only when a tradition for whatever reason is unattributable either to Judaism or to Christianity,² will have ceased to be meaningful. Why? Because its numerous presuppositions on the nature of tradition, for example, a rather free formation of tradition designed almost exclusively to serve immediately practical communitarian concerns, no longer obtain.

Käsemann, moreover, mistakenly amalgamated two distinct indices to the historicity of data (discontinuity with the transmitting Church and originality vis-à-vis Judaism). Whether this really was a mistake is probably best decided on the basis of concrete examples of universally acknowledged historicity that do not accord with the so-called

1. J.M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1959), p. 36.

2. E. Käsemann, 'The Problem of the Historical Jesus', in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 15, 47.

criterion. That Jesus had disciples, that he affirmed the authority of the Scriptures, that he shared in the life of synagogue and temple, that he understood God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses and David and Isaiah, all this is historical, though it all accords with the Judaism of the time. Again, that he proclaimed the reign of God, that he often taught in parables, that he addressed God as 'Abba', that he 'cleansed' the temple, that he suffered crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, all this is historical, though it all accords with the faith of the transmitting Church.

If Käsemann had thought his criterion through, he would have noticed a subversive singularity: it does not make sense that a tradition crossing the grain of the transmitting Church might have entered the story of Jesus from the Judaism of the time. That the Christian community should have gratuitously adopted from Judaism elements in discord with its own tendencies and practices simply does not make sense. This means that the simultaneous demand for discontinuity and originality errs by excess. Discontinuity with the post-Easter Church is sufficient by itself to establish historicity.

But we have not yet touched on the most telling point. Käsemann's rejection of inferences of historicity on any basis other than his simple principle of 'firm ground' only when originality and discontinuity simultaneously obtain not only coheres with but derives from his acceptance of the classical form-critical account of the origin of the tradition. Once Gerhardsson's account is accepted, other indices to the historicity of data, quite familiar to historical scholarship, are immediately restored to relevance: attestation in diverse, relatively independent strands of tradition; attestation in a variety of forms (e.g. narrative material and sayings material); and especially correlation with modes of speech characteristic of Jesus. Charles Fox Burney was a pioneer in specifying these modes,¹ and Joachim Jeremias has thus far proven to be the most deft practitioner of this line of critical analysis and retrieval.²

Until we come to agreement on a more sober account of the origin of the Gospel tradition, we shall doubtless continue to have unsatisfactory discussions of historical criteriology. Over fifteen years ago now,

1. C.F. Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925).

2. Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology: The Proclamation of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).

Morna D. Hooker made a particularly incisive contribution to the discussion by her article 'On Using the Wrong Tool'.¹ Hooker's treatment, a response to Norman Perrin's complaint that she had not accepted the results of form criticism, was not only trenchant but decisive so far as the mistaken pretensions of form-critical analysis to settling matters of historicity were concerned. But the critique failed to come to a fully satisfactory conclusion for two reasons. On the philosophic side, it was undermined by a mistaken (implicitly positivist) recoil from 'subjectivity'. On the side of presuppositions respecting historical method, the critique failed precisely for lack of a viable account of the origin of the Gospel tradition.²

Hooker fully recognized the crucial bond between the scholar's view of the origin of the Gospel tradition and his appeal to concrete indices to the historicity of data; she left her readers, however, with a defeatist conclusion: any set of premises on the origin and character of the Gospel tradition was mere assumption, no set being demonstrably better than another. Given this gratuitous surrender to scepticism, it was no surprise that she concluded by positing the non-existence of 'assured [historical] results'.³

One of the matters on which the article was particularly clear touched the so-called 'burden of proof': it did not make sense to settle issues of historicity on the basis of assumption. 'The burden of proof' was to be assigned neither by a blanket assumption in favour of historicity nor by a blanket assumption in favour of non-historicity. So far, so good. But there must be a coherent follow-up to this good observation, namely, that, having disembarrassed ourselves of all short-cuts by methodical assumption, we stand in need of concrete indices not only to the historicity of data, but also to the non-historicity of data. Since David Friedrich Strauss in the 1830s there have been very few proposals of clearly formulated concrete indices to non-historicity. True, Jeremias showed how to differentiate between the language of Jesus and that of the early Church (in his analyses of

1. M.D. Hooker, 'On Using the Wrong Tool', *Theology* 75 (1972), pp. 570-81.

2. See B.F. Meyer, 'Objectivity and Subjectivity in Historical Criticism of the Gospels', in *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Allison Park: Pickwick Press, 1989), pp. 129-45.

3. Hooker, 'Wrong Tool', p. 581.

Jesus' 'explanations' of his parables)¹ and Oscar Cullmann offered a number of useful, more general observations on the matter.² But for the most part this important issue has been overlooked.

It stands to reason that those scholars who have managed to make solidly probable historical ascertainments about Jesus are precisely those who have found grounds for the rejection of scepticism in their accounts of the origin of the Gospel tradition. In the current generation of living emeriti there come to mind the names of C.F.D. Moule, Heinz Schürmann, Otto Betz, and Harald Riesenfeld, among others. Nevertheless, across the whole field of New Testament studies from mid-century to the present day, scepticism has proven to be a stubborn, if not ineradicable, habit of mind. Current practice predictably reflects the current failure to sort out these theoretical issues. Books on the historical Jesus over the past decade have demonstrated this or that virtue, informed attention to the Judaic background, alertness to social history and a pioneering application of social-scientific methods to historical-Jesus research, and an ever more acute literary sensitivity; but the first goal of the historical enterprise is arrival at fact, and here the monographs are sometimes painfully disappointing. The proximate source of the disappointment is the lack of a solid, productive, consistently applied criteriology for judgments of historicity; but behind this failure stands, once again, a set of crippling inhibitions and uncertainties respecting the origins of the Gospel tradition, an easily detected hangover from classical form criticism.

My point is that, once established as true, the Gerhardsson account would signal an era of renewed confidence in historical-Jesus research. We would become far less liable to the temptation to be stunningly original. Given Gerhardsson's account of the origin of the Gospel tradition, such original constructs as a political, un-eschatological Jesus heading 'the peace party' in Judaism,³ or a deceptively peaceful revolutionary giving the world anti-establishment wisdom in

1. Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), pp. 77-79.

2. O. Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2nd edn, 1967), p. 172.

3. M.J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teachings of Jesus* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), pp. 234-37.

parable form,¹ or a Jesus intent on including the wicked in his kingdom without requiring their conversion,² would likely die unborn. For it is difficult, if not impossible, to conjure up this combination: on the one hand, commitment to an account of tradition under the care of 'eyewitnesses' who had now become 'ministers of the word' and, on the other hand, these stunningly original views of Jesus. No; here something would have to give way, probably the Jesus construct. The only alternative would be a hermeneutic of radical suspicion, like that of Hermann Samuel Reimarus. That is, one would have to suppose that the shapers and sponsors of the Gospel tradition, whether conceived of as honourable or dishonourable men, have given us a 'tradition' divergent at critical points from the actuality of the past, but were inept enough to allow bits and pieces of the real story to subsist in the tradition until twentieth-century historians could retrieve the surprising truth. Portraits of Jesus of the kind I have described are far more likely to come into being on the supposition that the Gospel tradition originated in a freely creative milieu, more or less identical with or reminiscent of the spontaneous if implausible manner posited by the form critics.

3. *Impact on History of Transitions*

The hope of working out the transitions from John the Baptist, through Jesus and the earliest messianic community of his followers, to Paul and the communities of the Mediterranean basin in the post-Pauline era has been undermined by many factors, some philosophic (lack of a viable cognitional theory grounding hermeneutics and historical method), some theological (rejoicing in historical impasses lest historical intelligibility 'render the decision of faith superfluous'),³ and some historical, such as recoil from a viable account of the origin of the Gospel tradition; it would probably be utopian to think that we are likely to reverse this total situation easily or soon.

It is nonetheless clear that an end to recoil from a viable account of

1. Two works: J.D. Crossan, *In Parables* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973); J. Breech, *The Silence of Jesus* (Toronto: Doubleday, n.d.).

2. E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 200-11.

3. G. Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 56.

the origin of the Gospel tradition would be an enormous boon. It would clear a path to the recovery of the eschatological and election-historical character of the related missions of John and Jesus. It would make possible a sane approach to judgments of the historicity of the esoteric tradition in the Gospels and thus make possible the recovery of Jesus' own scenario of the future. This in turn would allow us to define historically the transition from Jesus to the post-Jesus community.

Affirmation of the historicity of the esoteric tradition in the Gospels would resolve the mostly bogus problem of 'how the proclaimer became the proclaimed'. True, Jesus did not publicly proclaim himself; to his entourage of followers, however, he did specify in advance his personal destiny of repudiation, suffering, death, and vindication, and he incorporated this destiny into his messianic mission. In this context, C.K. Barrett's 1984 treatment of the eucharistic words¹ seems to me a striking success.

The real problem of how we should understand the transition from Jesus to the Easter Church does not lie in the supposed failure of Jesus to connect salvation with his own more-than-prophetic mission. It lies rather in the disparity between Jesus' scenario of the future and the situation of the post-Easter Church. Contrary to all expectation, the followers of Jesus found themselves compelled to differentiate two moments: the already realized vindication of Jesus by his resurrection and the still to be realized coming of the reign of God.

The problem of the disparity between Jesus' scenario of the future and the actuality of history bears most incisively on the nature of prophetic knowledge as we know it from the biblical tradition. It has long seemed to me that a starting point is recognition that, as symbolic language differs from literal language, symbolic knowledge differs from empirical knowledge,² and its 'verification', like the 'sign' that God gave Moses (Exod. 3.12), does not dispense with faith but enhances it.

Words such as 'From now on the Son of man will be seated at the

1. C.K. Barrett, 'Jesus and the Word', in *Rudolf Bultmanns Werk und Wirkung* (ed. B. Jasper; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), pp. 81-91.

2. *The Man for Others* (New York: Bruce, 1970), pp. 55-60; *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1979), pp. 242-49.

right hand of power... ' (cf. Lk. 22.69) belong, like the riddle of the new sanctuary (Mt. 26.61 // Mk 14.58), to a pre-Easter scenario which allows no room for the interim between resurrection and Parousia. A new scenario imposes itself *ex eventu*. It is the measured progression of history that, bit by bit, reveals both the meanings and the referents of prophecy; and since so much of the prophecy of Jesus bears on the end of history, the Christian believers will have to content themselves with the acknowledgment that only with the events of the end of history will the full meaning and truth of the prophecy be revealed. In any case, an acknowledgment of the difference between Jesus' eschatological scenario and that of primitive Christianity seems to me integral to the task of dealing with the transition from the pre-Easter Jesus to the post-Easter messianic community.

The further transitions from the Jerusalem 'Εβραῖοι to the mixed community of Antioch and to the missionary communities founded by Paul and Barnabas, or by Paul and his other companions, or by Peter, or other early missionaries in the Mediterranean basin present less radical problems. I have recently followed in the line of countless predecessors in attempting my own reconstruction of the continuities and discontinuities between Jerusalem and Antioch, between Antioch and Paul, and between Paul and his successors.¹ (The distinctive trait of this modest effort lay in correlating two distinct issues, that of identity: what made Christianity to be what it was; and that of self-definition: how in the case of any given community was this identity culturally incarnated?) Others, almost as recently, have filled out the picture with specialized studies in Petrine Christianity and its developments,² and Johannine Christianity and its developments.³ Where this kind of historical effort has succeeded, it seems to me, the success has usually, if not invariably, been conditioned by a generally conservative account of the origin of the Gospel tradition and a willingness to entertain the possibility of Acts' substantial historical authenticity.

1. *The Early Christians: Their World Mission and Self-Discovery* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1986).

2. R.E. Brown and J.P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983).

3. For example, R.E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

4. The Church Revealed

Nothing of what I have said up until now seems to me remarkable or original. It stands to reason that the account of the origin of the Gospel tradition (and, it should be added, of the historical usefulness of the Acts of the Apostles) will impinge on what one judges to be serviceable indices to the historicity and non-historicity of Gospel data; on how one goes about the task of retrieving the figures of John and of Jesus and the character of their missions; on how one conceives early Christian developments from the primitive community of Jerusalem to the post-Pauline Christianity of the Mediterranean basin. But these topics by no means exhaust the list of topics on which Gerhardsson's account of the Gospel tradition significantly impinges.

The coming into being of the Gospel tradition, as Gerhardsson has depicted it, is, directly, a disclosure of Jesus and his mission. Indirectly, however, it is a disclosure of the Church born of Jesus' mission. At the outset I said that Gerhardsson's account of the origins of the Gospel tradition was 'a fundamental issue', and I held in abeyance the ultimate reason for its pivotal character. The time has now come to define it. The reason why Gerhardsson's account of Christian tradition decisively conditions the whole sphere of early Christian studies is that according to this account there stands, indirectly disclosed by the processes of tradition, the reality of the transmitting Church.

Now, there is a sense in which every account of tradition, including that of the form critics, brings the transmitting Church to light. But there is a difference. The Church that the Bultmannian account of tradition has conjured up is a phenomenon of which we have never otherwise heard and which we would never otherwise have imagined. It is unrecognizable. Gerhardsson, on the contrary, has offered an account of tradition that indirectly brings into our field of vision a Church that we have heard of from the letters of Paul and from the Acts of the Apostles; it is familiar; we recognize it.

Over the past fifty years New Testament scholars have been retrieving with extraordinary skill the confessions, hymns, hymnic fragments, and other brief faith-formulas from the letters of Paul and other New Testament letters. This has amounted to a quantum jump in our grasp of the earliest, pre-literary Christian faith. But together with this retrieval of faith there is, indirectly, a retrieval of the

churchmen, the Church, that is the subject of that faith. This Church, it is no surprise to observe, is not the sum of the communitarian functions posited by form criticism. Prominent traits of its faith are the understanding of past events as salvific (Rom. 1.34; 3.25-26; 8.34; etc.) and the acknowledgment of the authoritative collective witness of 'Cephas and...the twelve' (1 Cor. 15.5). In a word, this Church corresponds point by point to the Church familiar from Paul, the Gospels, and Acts, as well as to the Church implicit in Gerhardsson's account of tradition.

If this Church was not, in fact, a datum of earliest Christianity—if, on the contrary, to the extent that it came into existence at all, this was only in fragmentary and adventitious fashion—then the bottom would have fallen out of otherwise justified negative criticism of 'the 1880 consensus' (according to which there were no real ties between Jesus and 'the Church'),¹ of the 'Early Catholicism' construct as it emerged from the discussions of Harnack and Sohm,² of the identification of early Christianity as a syncretism (in the wake of Hermann Gunkel's 1903 monograph),³ and of the continuing impact of Walter Bauer's views on orthodoxy and heresy.⁴

If, on the contrary, this Church was a factor, a presence, a massive datum of earliest Christianity, not only formally witnessed to by Paul and the evangelists but implicitly attested as the subject of the pre-Pauline songs and confessions preserved by Paul, it follows that all these weather-beaten discussions are subverted in more or less thoroughgoing fashion. Hence the plus-value which, it seems to me, attaches to sober accounts of the origins of the Gospel tradition, among which Gerhardsson's is rightly prominent.

Here I do not wish to be misunderstood. First, I am under no illusion that the following brief observations on these charged issues are about to expunge them utterly from the agenda of historians and

1. O. Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1932).

2. See, e.g., the treatment of Hermann-Josef Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus bei Adolf von Harnack, Rudolph Sohm und Ernst Käsemann* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1977), pp. 47-144.

3. H. Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903).

4. W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971 [German edition, 1934]).

theologians. My point is simply that Gerhardsson's account of tradition is bound to affect all of them in a fundamental way. Secondly, I do not mean to lay some *a priori* claim to Gerhardsson's approval of my own views of the 1880 consensus, the discussion of *Frühkatholizismus*, the history of religions school's theses on Christianity as 'a syncretistic phenomenon', and Bauer's idiosyncratic way of dealing with orthodoxy and heresy. I mean, rather, that by his carefully calibrated and circumstantially detailed account of tradition, Gerhardsson has brought into focus a reality of the most basic and pervasive importance: the transmitting Church, itself belonging to the category of eschatological fulfilment, a Church bearing witness to Christ both by its memory and its pneumatic apostolic authority. This act of retrieval throws a powerful, pitiless stream of light on all these discussions.

The 1880 Consensus

Olof Linton's dissertation, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung*,¹ traced the slow reversal of the 1880 consensus (no connection between Jesus and 'Church') up to the early 1930s. The reversal, despite intermittent reappearances of the old thesis in new form, now seems irreversibly established. The prolonged episode of Bultmannian influence could delay but neither prevent nor significantly modify this thoroughgoing reversal.

The primitive community of Jerusalem understood itself as the nucleus of Israel restored—a self-understanding perfectly convergent with the mission of Jesus as bearing precisely on the eschatological restoration of Israel. This is what most concretely binds the mission of Jesus and the messianic community that issued from it with the hopes of Israel as expressed in the great prophetic theme of *שוב שבוה*, which Ernst Ludwig Dietrich defined in 1925 as the eschatological restoration (*die endzeitliche Wiederherstellung*) of Israel.²

The 1880 consensus took shape in the theological context of liberalism and at a high point in the history of congregationalism. 'The Church' stood outside the sphere of the sacred. It belonged to the profane task of social organization. The theologians were hesitant to

1. O. Linton, *Urkirche*, p. 37.

2. E.L. Dietrich, *שוב שבוה: Die endzeitliche Wiederherstellung bei den Propheten* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1925).

specify just when this task became historically relevant to the early Christians.

After 1892, when the theme of eschatology imposed itself in the wake of Johannes Weiss's monograph on the preaching of the reign of God, the Church, an optional extra for which the early Christians had neither use nor time, was absent from historical retrieval. No one builds a house in a land threatened with a flood. But, as Linton put it, the Church is no such house; rather, it is 'a rock to which the threatened can flee'.¹ In a word, 'Church' was at the heart of the earliest Christian eschatology. Abstractly, one might ask whether 'eschatology' and 'tradition' could plausibly cohere. Concretely, it is evident that they did cohere. Paul's letters constitute the most vibrant witness to this coexistence.

Frühkatholizismus

The term *Frühkatholizismus* has undergone changes of meaning and reference with every forward step in the laborious reconstruction of early Christian history. Indeed, there was a question that pre-existed the term: how and when had the *ecclesia catholica* become what it was? For the most part the reformers answered: in the Middle Ages. Later, in post-Enlightenment Protestantism, catholicism came into being following the first five centuries of unity and agreement. Then, in the nineteenth century, it was discovered that Constantine had not created the catholic Church, but had received it already fully constituted. After Harnack it was generally agreed that Constantine constituted the *terminus ante quem* of the process of catholicizing Christianity.

Where was the *terminus a quo*? Early in our century it was thought to have been first revealed by Clement of Rome and Ignatius of Antioch. 'Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic Church' (*Smyrn.* 8.2). But surely there were antecedents and conditions of this transition. Soon the Bultmannians located New Testament antecedents in James, in 2 Peter, in the Pastorals, in Luke-Acts. In his posthumously published essay 'Jew and Greek',² Gregory Dix understood the Pauline achievement not in terms of the Hellenizing, but of the

1. O. Linton, 'Church and Office in the New Testament', in *This is the Church* (ed. A. Nygren; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), p. 103.

2. G. Dix, *Jew and Greek* (Westminster: Dacre, 1953).

catholicizing, of the Church.¹ The process by which Christianity ceased to be Jewish did not make it Greek: 'It became itself—Christianity'.² (I would invite those inclined to think Harnack right and Dix wrong to allow the observations of Bernard Lonergan in 'The Dehellenization of Dogma'³ to test, or at least lend nuance to, their convictions.) Finally, with the appearance of the Church as the shaper and transmitter of the Gospel tradition, a Church with its own cult and regimen, presided over by churchmen such as Cephas, the twelve, James and Paul, one is tempted to agree with those who think that the purely historical component in the discussion of early catholicism has about run its course.⁴

There has been and is, of course, a far more determinative component or function of the discussion. Ignatius's use of the word 'catholic' may have had to do with the establishing of one faith καθ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν. The early use of the word surely could not comprehend the connotations of 'catholic' in nineteenth-century German Church history. The process of replacing charism by law, faith by sacraments, the pneumatic assembly by the salvific institution, was a catastrophic devolution of which Ignatius was entirely unaware. But I am content to leave the theological functions of the discussion (more evident than ever in Ernst Käsemann's use of *Katholizismus* for the Church under its own lordship, discerned as such by loss of the principle of 'justification by faith'⁵) to whoever wishes to prolong this particular theological programme.

In What Sense 'Syncretistic'?

The potential impact of Gerhardsson's account of tradition on the discussion of syncretism is equally worth noting. Gunkel, it should be

1. Dix, *Jew and Greek*, p. 109.

2. Dix, *Jew and Greek*, p. 109.

3. B. Lonergan, 'The Dehellenization of Dogma', in *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), pp. 11-32.

4. M. Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1979), p. 122: 'The term "early Catholicism". . . does not add anything to our understanding of earliest Christian history. . . If we want to, we can find "early Catholic traits" even in Jesus and Paul: the phenomena thus denoted are almost entirely a legacy of Judaism.'

5. E. Käsemann, *Der Ruf der Freiheit* (Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968) and other works; see Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus*.

remembered, understood not only primitive Christianity but also classical Israel and postexilic Judaism to be syncretistic. Nor should it be forgotten that Gunkel made his way in the discussion without offering any opinion on what would constitute a firm religious individuality or identity. According to the positivist conception, individuality was constituted as such by being cut off from everything else, like a stone!¹ But this, as Collingwood argued, characterizes the world of nature, not the world of meaning or mind, 'where individuality consists not of separateness from environment but of the power to absorb environment into itself'.²

Once disembarassed of positivist notions of identity, it becomes possible to define Christian identity in Pauline fashion, namely, as the strict correlative of 'the gospel'. There are as many Christian identities as there are gospels; and inasmuch as there cannot be more than one 'power of salvation for all who believe' (Rom. 1.16), there can be but one gospel, and so one Christian identity correlative to it. Paul traced this new and unique identity to the Easter revelation: 'God through Christ reconciled us to himself' and by the revelation of his risen Son 'founded in us the message of reconciliation' (2 Cor. 5.18, 19). Such was the climax of what Gerhardsson calls 'the eruptive centre' of Christianity; out of it emerged a new tradition within the mother tradition of Judaism.³

The early history of Christianity, dynamic, rapid, unpredictable, exhibits a striking variety of culturally conditioned self-definitions to which this new identity was open. It would be easier to suppose with Gunkel that each new wrinkle in early Christian self-definition was a new identity, if there were not a mass of data commending an altogether different understanding of early Christian development. Among the data relevant to this issue I would pick out (a) the refusal of the Christian 'Εβραῖοι of Jerusalem to regard with indifference such spontaneous initiatives of the 'Ελληνισταί as the evangelizing of Samaritans and Gentiles; (b) the insistence of the innovators of Antioch, when their initiatives were questioned or disallowed by Jerusalem critics, that the conflict be brought to authoritative resolution in

1. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 162.

2. Collingwood, *Idea of History*, p. 162.

3. *The Gospel Tradition*, p. 10.

Jerusalem; (c) the series of initiatives by Paul designed not only to bind his own individual communities to one another but most emphatically to bind this whole network together with the church of Jerusalem.

We should conclude, it seems to me, that there are two radically different sorts of syncretism: strong syncretism, qualifying a cult that has little identity of its own, but is rather the sum of elements assembled from outside itself; and weak syncretism, qualifying a cult that, having a distinct identity of its own, borrows, transforms what is borrowed, and enhances its native identity by this borrowing and transforming. To the extent that other gods actually threatened Yahwism, prophets on the model of Elijah went on the war-path against those other gods.

The key issue, then, is identity. The two religions celebrated by the Christian Bible both had strong identities, which on the whole were enhanced, not subverted, by openness to the surrounding world. The God of Israel was not interchangeable with other gods; he symbolized and revealed no reality more ultimate than himself. The same held true in Christianity, which registered and selectively integrated into itself the influences of apocalypticism, the mysteries, gnosis, and, eventually, philosophers from Plato to Proclus. What Gunkel missed was 'identity'. What Gerhardsson's account of tradition indirectly discloses is, once again, a community outfitted with a distinctive, Easter-born 'identity'. This is the main reason why I think that, if Gerhardsson's account were to be substantially established as true, the discussion of syncretism such as we find in the heirs of the history of religions school, for example, in Bultmann's treatment of 'hellenistic Christianity',¹ would have to undergo serious surgery. The objective supposition of Bultmann's theorizing at this point is a Church still in quest of its identity.

The Bauer Thesis

A comparable fate, it seems to me, befalls the discussion of orthodoxy and heresy insofar as it takes its inspiration from Walter Bauer.² Bauer's great success lay in dismantling the scheme of Church history established by the early Church itself, from the apostolic fathers and

1. See *Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting* (New York: World [Meridian], 1956), pp. 177-202.

2. See *Orthodoxy and Heresy*.

apologetes through Irenaeus to Eusebius. On the other hand, Bauer has rightly been blamed for such bad habits as disregarding counter-evidence, arguing from silence, and sedulously avoiding the issue of doctrinal truth.¹

But, although the issue of Christian identity is also relevant here, too, Gerhardsson's account of the Gospel tradition relates in a different way to the discussion of orthodoxy and heresy. We have already referred to the way in which practical paraenetic concerns dominated the classical form-critical construal of discrete units of tradition. Contrast Gerhardsson's account of the sayings material. What Jesus said is valuable and worth preserving in part just because it belongs to the tradition (i.e. because he is thought to have said it). He is not just a teacher, but a teacher of *meshalim*. His *meshalim* do not merely convey the gist of what he said, but are concise, carefully formulated, well-turned, memorable units of discourse. What was the point of transmitting these units? Were they being pressed into service as means to some extrinsic end? Not in Gerhardsson's account. They did not function simply in the service of policy and other practical concerns. They were, above all, elements of witness to Jesus, in the service of values such as truth and hope. For example, in pre-literary restricted unities such as the Synoptic sets of miracle stories, both hope (for which the Synoptic miracle accounts used the word *πίστις*) and truth (the truth of the proclamation vindicated by cures and exorcisms) belonged to the thematic core of the narratives. Truth, moreover, was not only a theme from the time of Jesus; it was also a value inherent in the transmitting Church's act of witnessing.

This trait is equally observable in the pre-Pauline faith formulas. This is the background to what would emerge within Christianity as a phenomenon unique in the ancient world: an intense thematization of truth. Non-Christian parallels, in the sphere whether of cults or of the philosophic schools, pale by comparison.² Lonergan's dialectical analysis of doctrinal development up to Nicaea makes the point as concretely as might be wished.³

1. See J. McCue, 'Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei*', *Concilium* 192 (1987), pp. 28-35.

2. See N. Brox, 'Häresie', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 13 (1984), cols. 248-97 at 248-56.

3. B. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicea* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

Bauer gave short shrift to this potent and pervasive datum. His whole way of conceiving the drive to orthodoxy consequently amounted to a kind of category error. In Max Weber's terminology, Bauer conceived the drive to orthodoxy as *zweckrational*, structured by the lining up of means to ends. In fact, however, the drive to orthodoxy was *wertrational*, structured by commitment to values such as truth. One of Bauer's dramatic but dubious constructs—the Roman Church using 'orthodoxy' to bulldoze its way to ecclesiastical eminence—is a perfect expression of this category error, betraying a blindspot respecting the intense early Christian commitment to truth. This commitment was not a phenomenon peculiar to the second century, but a facet of Christian life from the beginning of the Gospel tradition and all through the career of Paul.¹

Let these rather too succinct observations serve to illustrate the kind of sweep or scope which, it seems to me, quite naturally accrues to the Gerhardsson account of tradition in the function of its indirect disclosure of the transmitting Church.

5. Conclusion

In the years since *Memory and Manuscript*, Birger Gerhardsson has defended his view of tradition, clarified the role of the rabbinic analogy, widened his general scheme and filled it out with concrete detail. He has thus rendered a substantial service, adding to the list of distinguished Swedish contributions to New Testament scholarship. This brief appreciation of his achievement has sought to suggest its potentially pivotal role in the task of reshaping our inheritances from the scholarship of the last century and the first half of this century. Great events and movements since the 1930s have spurred a set of revisions unimaginable a hundred years ago. They have come out of a rediscovery of the Church both in antiquity and today. Gerhardsson's work, which at first seemed to some an oddity without plausible context, has in fact been at the centre of this rediscovery. And in the wake of this rediscovery a new context has come into being, full of promise for the study of earliest Christianity.

1. See C.K. Barrett, 'What is New Testament Theology? Some Reflections', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 3 (1981), pp. 1-22, esp. 12-13.

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